A Fox in the Chicken Coop? *The Editors*

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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THIEU

"The Americans have shown too much concern for their 500 prisoners in Hanoi, and now the North Vietnamese use them as merchandise to impose political conditions on us. It's disgusting."

Interview with Oriana Fallaci

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The answers to some questions frequently asked by our sponsors

If you are considering sponsoring a child through the Christian Children's Fund, certain questions may occur to you. Perhaps you will find them answered here.

Q. What does it cost to sponsor a child? A. Only $12 per month. (Your gifts are tax deductible.)

Q. May I choose the child I wish to help? A. You may indicate your preference of boy or girl, age, and country. Many sponsors allow us to select a child from our emergency list.

Q. Will I receive a photograph of my child? A. Yes, and with the photograph will come a case history plus a description of the Home or Project where your child receives help.

Q. How long does it take before I learn about the child assigned to me? A. You will receive your personal sponsor folder in about two weeks, giving you complete information about the child you will be helping.

Q. May I write to my child? A. Yes. In fact, your child will write to you a few weeks after you become a sponsor. Your letters are translated by one of our workers overseas. You receive your child's original letter, plus an English translation, direct from the Home or Project overseas.

Q. What type of Projects does CCF support overseas? A. Besides the orphanages and Family Helper Projects CCF has homes for the blind, abandoned babies homes, day care nurseries, health homes, vocational training centers, and many other types of Projects.

Q. Who supervises the work overseas? A. Regional offices are staffed with both Americans and nationals. Caseworkers, orphanage superintendents, housemothers, and other personnel must meet high professional standards—plus have a deep love for children.

Q. Is CCF independent or church operated? A. Independent. CCF is incorporated as a nonprofit organization. We work closely with missionaries of 41 denominations. No child is refused entrance to a Home because of creed or race.

Q. When was CCF started, and how large is it now? A. 1938 was the beginning, with one orphanage in China. Today, over 150,000 children are being assisted in 55 countries. However, we are not interested in being "big." Rather, our job is to be a bridge between the American sponsor, and the child being helped overseas.

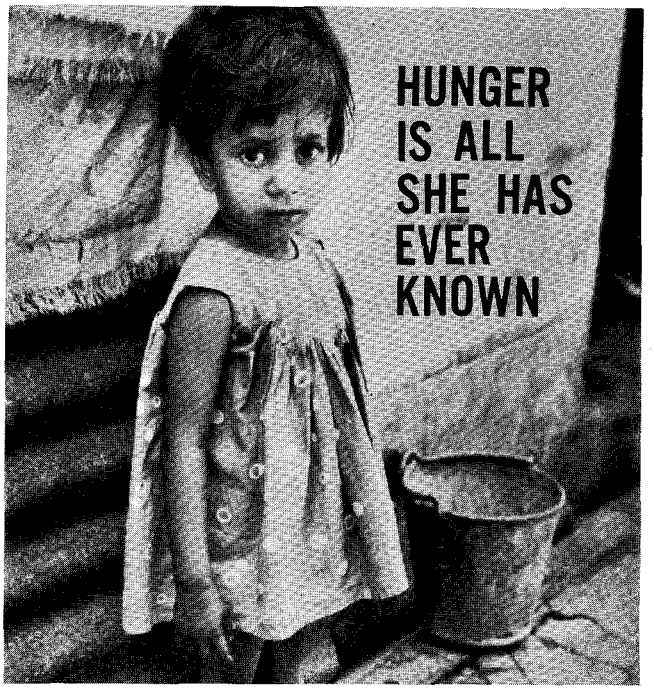
Q. May I visit my child? A. Yes. Our Homes and Projects around the world are delighted to have sponsors visit them. Please inform the superintendent in advance of your scheduled arrival.

Q. May groups sponsor a child? A. Yes, church classes, office workers, civic clubs, schools and other groups. We ask that one person serve as correspondent for a group.

Q. Are all the children orphans? A. No. Although many of our children are orphans, youngsters are helped primarily on the basis of need. Some have one living parent unable to care for the child properly. Others come to us because of abandonment, broken homes, parents unwilling to assume responsibility, serious illness of one or both parents, or parents just too poor to care for their children.

Q. How can I be sure that the money I give actually reaches the child? A. CCF keeps close check on all children through field offices, supervisors and caseworkers. Homes and Projects are inspected by our staff. Each Home is required to submit an annual audited statement.

Q. Is CCF registered with any government agency? A. Yes, CCF is registered with the U.S. State Department's Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid, holding Registration No. 080.



Margaret was found in a back lane of Calcutta, lying in her doorway, unconscious from hunger. Inside, her mother had just died in childbirth.

You can see from the expression on Margaret's face that she doesn't understand why her mother can't get up, or why her father doesn't come home, or why the dull throb in her stomach won't go away.

What you can't see is that Margaret is dying of malnutrition. She has periods of fainting, her eyes are strangely glazed. Next will come a bloated stomach, falling hair, parched skin. And finally, death from malnutrition, a killer that claims 10,000 lives *every day*.

Meanwhile, in America we eat 4.66 pounds of food a day per person, then throw away enough to feed a family of six in India.

If you were to suddenly join the ranks of 1½ billion people who are forever hungry, your next meal might be a bowl of rice, day after tomorrow a piece of fish the size of a silver dollar, later in the week more rice—maybe.

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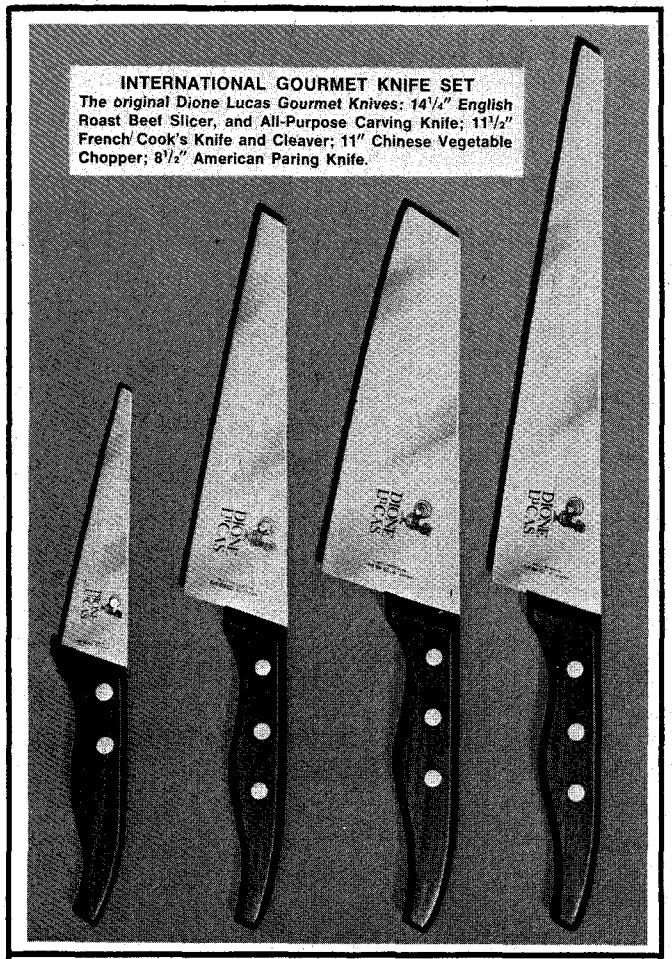

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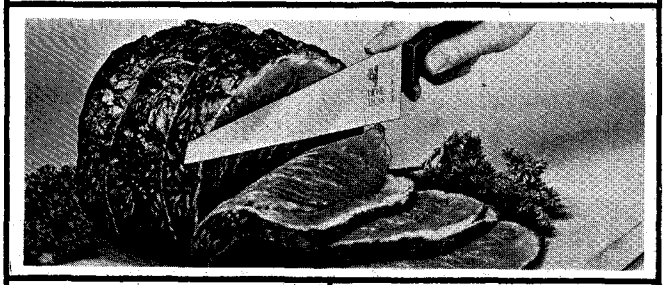

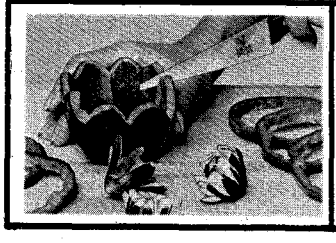

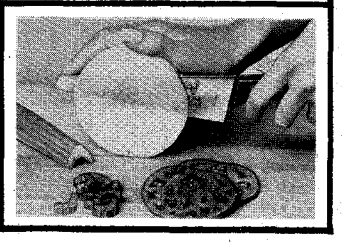

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from Washington
January 20, 1973

To the Battle Stations

Things are coming to the crunch, now, very fast. The President gives his inaugural address Saturday, and follows it shortly with his budget and other messages, and then the Democratic Congress must decide what to do. Everybody is acting tough and, at the moment I write, the North Vietnamese in Paris show no evidence of giving way. This odd city has seen a lot of drama in its time; rarely more than this.

We have watched this situation develop with growing incredulity. Mr. Nixon sensed his impending landslide and didn't wait for it before telling Congress that he wasn't going to spend the money it had just passed over his veto to fight pollution, but would impound half of it. This was announced by presidential assistant John Ehrlichman at a briefing, October 17, that amounted to an ultimatum. No Congress could ignore the challenge. Observers rubbed their eyes. What good politically did it do Mr. Nixon to announce his plan in advance, even if he meant to carry it through? It seemed almost like a huff.

In the interview given to *The Washington Star-News*, and published two days after the election, Mr. Nixon said he was "completely confident" of peace in Vietnam ("you can count on it"), charged the so-called "leadership class" with what amounted to betrayal, and likened the "average American" to a "child in the family." (The latter phrase, significantly, stayed in the text through White House revisions.)

Then, of course, the election victory; the ferocious Cabinet reshuffle; the breakdown of peace negotiations; the angry White House response that again seemed like a tantrum; the Twelve Days of Christmas bombing, and finally . . . silence. Not a peep from the invisible Chief, not an explanation, not a defense. Herbert Klein, director of Communications, said on television that Mr. Nixon didn't have to explain, "he is fully accountable for battlefield tactics"; if negotiations failed, he said, "I would not rule out any tactic." He didn't say a nuclear tactic, but he didn't rule it out.

The point is that every move since last October that Mr. Nixon has made puts him in greater defiance of the Democratic Congress. He has asserted a power of the purse which is, at least, constitutionally debatable, and a power of war and peace which the most absolute monarch would envy. Mr. Nixon feels he has a huge election mandate. Some might argue that it was a mandate against George McGovern, not a mandate for Richard Nixon, but who can know?

The funny thing is that under other circumstances I would say that the man who got the third largest landslide in history three months ago is in political trouble. The mood is different from anything I can remember. Congress is really sore. My bones keep sending me signals, and I keep dismissing them as ridiculous, but I am not sure anymore.

The battle is more likely to come over the budget than over Vietnam. Congress has talked about cutting off war appropriations before and got nowhere. It is probably angrier now than ever previously, but it is almost beyond belief that it is going to end the war. Where are the Borahs, the LaFollettes, the Norris's? More likely, the war issue will embitter the White House-congressional relationship and it will find vent in related battles, like the budget and spending.

America has an enormous back-up of unmet social needs. The penalty for not meeting them is the penalty of not repairing a leaky roof before it rains—the whole structure ultimately rots out. It is true that federal expenditures, not paid for in taxation, cause inflation: Mr. Nixon says this over and over. Very well then, why not have taxation? To the President that is unspeakable. And yet the fact is that there have been unnecessarily large tax cuts in recent years which are largely responsible for our Treasury red ink, and that the overall weight of taxation in the United States is low. "We have one of the lowest relative tax burdens in the industrialized world," says noted economist Walter Heller in a newsletter last week for the National City Bank of Minneapolis.

The struggle with Congress, I think, won't come over generalized concepts but over concrete, immediate programs, point by point. It will come over the proposed White House attrition of social programs. A recent Harris poll shows the public is ready to spend money for education, for curbing pollution, for aiding the poor. Taxes for these purposes are acceptable. There is the President's announced decision to freeze federally subsidized housing starts—it has unlimbered the congressional guns, even before the inaugural.

"President Nixon has decided to spend several billion dollars a year more in bombing Asians, and to spend several billion dollars less in housing needy Americans," says Wisconsin's Bill Proxmire, who is often the conscience of the Senate.

You can see the argument on spending coming back again and again to Vietnam. There is no end to it, particularly in this tough, authoritarian stance Mr. Nixon seems to be assuming. The paper that carried the potentially inflammatory story of the berserk New Orleans black sniper last week carried word that the administration plans to dismantle the Community Relations Service, a small, healing outfit created under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to try to mediate and calm down racial emergencies. There are likely to be more racial flare-ups and this seems like a shortsighted way to economize. Always it is the imponderables that defy conformity, and trip up the literal-minded. The huge carrier Kitty Hawk has racial riots—how does that fit into naval regulations? A veteran B-52 pilot decides he won't murder any more little brown peasants on combat missions. Conscience breaks out in the strangest places; even over poverty.

About a fifth of the nation is below or near the poverty line ($4137 for a nonrural family of four) and the gap between rich and poor is widening. Mr. Nixon acknowledged this himself when he introduced (and then dropped) his spectacular Family Assistance Program. He said welfare is a "mess." It is, and he is leaving it there. It will take money to fix it. Proposed budget economies won't come out of the Pentagon but out of services for the middle class and the poor; schools, houses, hospitals, police, pollution control, things that taxes buy. These are likely to be the counters in the big clash over the budget.

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A Fox in the Chicken Coop?

We noted last week that Litton Industries, the company Roy L. Ash helped found and build, is a slumping corporate giant whose financial survival and recovery depend in good part not only on billions of dollars in claims and contracts in the hands of the US Navy, but on dozens of other federal government contracts and programs that can be either controlled or influenced by the President's Office of Management and Budget. The appointment of Ash to be Mr. Nixon's OMB director is therefore uniquely indicative of the administration's insensitivity to conflicts of interest. Unlike most top federal officials, Ash will not be confirmed by the Senate and thereafter summonable for congressional questioning. He will preside over budget decisions in secret, and as a presidential adviser be responsible only to Mr. Nixon. Mr. Ash has already let it be known that he will take part in navy budget matters.

Mr. Ash resigned the presidency of Litton on December 9. On the same day, he appeared at the company's annual meeting and talked of how, "*we* [at Litton] are back near plan," and how "in the aggregate, and over a reasonable time, *we* believe the results from striving toward *our* corporate objective will fully meet stockholders' extra patience."

Litton Industries grossed $2.5 billion in 1972 but showed net earnings of under one million dollars for the year and an actual loss when preferred dividends were paid. That performance contrasts with earnings of $49 million in 1971 and $67 million in 1970. In its best year, 1967, Litton netted $83 million. The spectacular five-year drop in Litton earnings (over the same period its stock price fell from $120 to $12 a share) came primarily from declines in its business and industrial systems groups. The collapse in earnings would have come even faster if Litton had not been making steady profits in its overall defense work and its navy shipbuilding contracts. Though not as profitable as in earlier years, the defense and marine systems group was reported producing a $20 million profit in 1972. However, Litton depended for that defense group profit upon still to be released navy funds, a situation highlighted in a note from the company's own accounting firm, Touche Ross & Co., and printed in its 1972 annual report. Litton's financial position, the accountants stated, was fairly presented "subject to successful resolution of unsettled matters re-

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lated to the LHA Program [amphibious assault ships] and recovery of recorded contract claims" which total $164 million.

Key to the future of Litton is its new shipbuilding facility in Pascagoula, Mississippi which today has a backlog of three billion dollars in navy contracts. It was in the mid-'60s that the company decided to construct the first modern shipyard in the United States since World War II. It was to be patterned after the highly successful computerized Japanese and Swedish yards which turn out commercial ships by a modular or sectional construction method rather than the old-fashioned steel-plate-by-steel-plate technique.

Litton had in 1961 purchased the Ingalls Shipbuilding Company which had a yard on the east bank of the Pascagoula River. When searching for state and local assistance in locating its proposed "shipyard of the future," Litton used the threat that it would close down the Ingalls plant if the new yard went outside Mississippi. The state of Mississippi thereupon agreed to float a $130 million bond issue to finance construction of a 611-acre yard to be located across the river from the existing Ingalls facility. Litton was to pay all bond issue costs and interest and beginning in November 1972, principal repayments.

The first contracts awarded the new Litton Pascagoula yard were eight containerships for the Farrell and American President Lines. Almost half the costs were to be covered by a Maritime Administration subsidy. The ships were relatively simple in design and thought to be perfect for the break-in period of the yard.

In May 1968, with Litton Board Chairman Charles B. (Tex) Thornton's friend Lyndon Johnson in the White House, Litton won a competition to produce nine marine corps amphibious assault ships for the navy. The resultant contract was complex in its terms and took almost nine months to negotiate. By that time Mr. Ash's friend, President Nixon, was in the White House. (Ash has described himself as a "five-figure" contributor to Nixon in both 1968 and 1972, though last year only $500 turned up on the national records. Thornton gave roughly the same amounts to Johnson in 1964. Two other big Nixon donors, Henry Salvatori and Vernon Stouffer, are Litton board members, along with Jayne B. Spain, the Nixon-appointed vice chairman of the Civil Service Commission.)

The original ceiling cost for the nine amphibious assault ships (LHAs) was to be $1.2 billion. Payments were initially to be made on a startup cost-plus basis, then switched in September 1972 to progress payments for work completed. There was a section permitting renegotiation of the costs based on rising prices.

In June 1970, with some production problems on the containerships becoming visible, the navy awarded an unprecedented $2.1 billion contract to the new Litton yard, to be funded over five years, for 30 new destroyers. Delivery was to begin in 1974 with the final ship completed in 1978. At the same time, the older Ingalls yard across the river was handling hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of nuclear sub renovations along with construction of four navy ammunition ships.

By 1971, with LHA production delayed almost a year and the container ships lagging even more, the navy decided to cut its needs from nine to five LHAs. By then, however, it was becoming evident the five might cost as much as the original nine.

Despite all the backlogged navy work, or perhaps because of it, troubles piled up for Litton. There were labor problems, a hurricane, and just plain bad management with Litton executives in California trying to supervise the yard startup in Mississippi. Then the claims and counterclaims began.

With the commercial ships over a year behind schedule, it was clear that the two companies, Farrell and APL, would invoke the damage payment clauses in their Litton contracts. (As of December 1972, only one Farrell ship had been delivered by Litton, with the last of the remaining three delayed up to two years. The four APL ships were transferred from the new yard to the old and were to be built by the old method rather than the new modular system.) In anticipation of these damage suits, Litton itself filed against the two companies, claiming $8.4 million added costs had arisen from some 44 changes that had to be made at Farrell's and APL's requests. The two companies came back with sharp criticism of Litton and the manner in which the new yard was being run. They charged the Litton managers were not shipbuilders but "strictly aerospace oriented"; that there was "a low level of competency"; that "the amount of rework is phenomenal"; that "there was a paper blizzard" of incorrect drawings in the computerized operation; and that 14 months passed before Litton hired "an outstanding naval architect" for the yard. The chief of the Maritime Administration's Office for Ship Construction studied the Litton allegations and found them "wholly untenable," as to liability of the two companies for changes. Counsel for Farrell Lines implied Litton had filed false claims. "Frankly," Elmer C. Moddy wrote in one brief, "we don't think most of these [Litton] claims have any validity at all and they are set up primarily, as we see it, almost as an offset to the claim we are going to have for liquidated damages under the contract." Finally,

COMING: Peter J. Ognibene on David Halberstam's account of "The Best and the Brightest"

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in the end, Litton was given 35 extra days on its contract due to the impact of Hurricane Camille, but no money. In turn, under the same settlement, Litton had to pay the two ship companies $5.5 million for late delivery.

Dealing with the navy has proved a different matter. Litton has again filed initial claims for added costs because of changes, even though the navy has penalty clauses for late delivery. In the LHA contract, Litton has sought an additional $270 million related to the cancelled four ships. (The navy already has agreed to pay $109 million as a penalty for cancellation as specified in the contract.) Litton last March also asked that the entire contract be reset, with new target costs at nearly $237 million per ship, up from the original $133 million. Litton also sought a delay in switching over to progress payments—as against cost-plus—for fear there was no measurable progress to be seen for the $395 million the navy had sunk into the LHA program by November 1972.

Renegotiation of the LHA contract was important to Litton, a fact emphasized by Ash who was a participant. At one June meeting he told navy negotiators that the progress payment switch, which could require Litton repayments to the government, would cause a cash crisis for the company. He threatened to go to the White House to settle the question. In the end, the navy gave Litton a six-month extension for the switchover—until February 28 of this year—using damage done by Hurricane Camille as the excuse.

Last summer Litton also filed three extraordinary claims against the navy related to the nuclear submarine and ammunition ship contracts that were being performed at the old Ingalls yard. Altogether they totaled $164 million and are now in preliminary review stages before the Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals. As noted earlier, Litton's accountants said their analysis of the company's financial position rested on the prospect that "recovery of recorded contract claims" takes place. Some $41 million of those claims, the accountants noted, had as of July 31, 1972 "been recorded as receivables and inventory"—in other words as assets of the company.

Rather than accepting the claims, however, the navy appears to be vigorously fighting them. Admiral Hyman Rickover, who heads the navy's sub program, was so outraged by the claims that he recommended an investigation to see if Litton had broken the law for "misrepresentation, if not fraud" in trying to recover money from the navy for cost overruns. In his memo, Rickover said delays "were in fact caused by [Litton's] own poor planning, by its manpower shortages . . . and by mismanagement of the contract," words that seem to echo earlier charges by Farrell Line executives.

According to Senator William Proxmire, the commander of the Navy Ship Systems Command has established a three-man team to investigate Litton's claims. (It is ironic that a civil lawsuit going back almost 20 years is set for retrial this year. Thornton and Ash, then working for Hughes Aircraft, are accused of allegedly having false claims filed in an air force contract to extract larger payments from the government.)

In at least one of the Litton claims, the navy has already filed a counterclaim against the company for $3.7 million in penalty payments. One defense official says such government counterclaims will eventually total at least $12 million in the three cases.

What effect all this will have on the major destroyer contract remains to be seen. Critics of that contract say warships—which must constantly be changed to take the most up-to-date internal equipment—cannot be built on a modular basis. Nevertheless, Litton is pushing ahead. Fabrication of the first section of the first destroyer was started last June, one month early. Navy officials have already forecast some slippage in the destroyer contract but still are uncertain about the long-term prospects. Through 1972, $1.4 billion had been appropriated for 16 ships. Under Litton's schedule, the remaining 14 should be federally funded this year and next, with Ash presiding over the Office of Management and Budget.

But Litton's interests in federal dollars to be controlled by Ash go far beyond the navy funds in the defense budget. There is, for example, the company's impact on Pascagoula and its environs and the many federal grant and aid programs that it stimulated. A primarily federally funded manpower program paid $2.3 million in 1972 to Litton for training 510 prospective new Litton shipyard employees. Lacking any substantial public transportation, yet facing an influx of almost 10,000 new workers, Pascagoula has a grant from the federal urban mass transportation program. A $150,000 federal grant is paying half the cost of expanding the highway entrance to the old Ingalls facility. Special overpasses have been built with federal highway funds; more are being planned and financed.

Last month a $1.7 million grant was awarded for a new sewage treatment plant, under the same program that President Nixon cut in half. A shortage of some 2500 multifamily dwelling units is being alleviated, thanks to subsidized housing given builders through HUD. The local schools are getting impact aid of $200,000, thanks to the presence of navy children. The availability of industrial and drinking water has become a problem and the local county officials are seeking over four million dollars from the federal government for an additional reservoir. The hospital is some 150 beds short and is looking for federal aid. Thus, federal support for Litton shipbuilding has already grown well beyond navy contracts and must continue if it is to provide the means for the local populace to solve problems created by Litton's presence.

What can OMB's Roy Ash do in this situation that will not have the appearance of conflict of interest?

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The Way We Pay

Twelve days of Christmas bombing and last spring's North Vietnam offensive have increased the cost of the war anywhere from one billion to two billion dollars—probably not enough to require another supplemental appropriation by Congress. The President can always reduce other military operations, deplete stockpiles (the military is said to be running low on bombs), draw against unexpended balances in last year's budget and extract money from unpopular training and procurement categories. And when that is done, Mr. Nixon can still fall back on his authority to reprogram $750 million in the defense budget, an authority he has so far not found necessary to use.

The Johnson administration once sought a special supplemental to meet Vietnam war costs, but the Congress was so mean about it that the White House backed off. For the most part Johnson simply misled Congress (and perhaps himself) about the cost of the war. Rather than raise taxes or dismantle the Great Society, he was willing to pump huge deficits into an already overheating economy. With the economy, after three years of sluggish performance, once more expanding, Mr. Nixon is determined to pay for the war as he goes while holding down taxes—or, to be more precise, while holding onto big business tax breaks like the accelerated depreciation allowance. That is why, on so dubious a prerogative as impoundment of previously appropriated funds, the President has risked so much prestige. Only in this way can he shift priorities within the $250 billion limit and still spend more for defense.

Through his power to carry over unexpended but appropriated funds from one year to the next, a careful President can spend more than the budget would seem to allow. At the end of fiscal year 1972, for example, the total unexpended balances for the federal government came to $266.7 billion, setting up the kind of pipeline through which the Department of Defense could get double the money Congress actually appropriated for that year. Senator Proxmire computes that between fiscal years 1968 and 1972 the Pentagon actually spent $21.6 billion more than Congress appropriated! "One thing I've learned," one Senate aide says, "when they really want to, they can get the money, maybe just by shifting it out of some unpopular program—but not B-1 or ULMS money, of course, they wouldn't dare take it from anything that sexy."

Upwards of nine-tenths of the work of Congress, political scientists say, is concerned with spending issues. "But the system just isn't that tight," notes Representative Joseph Addabbo (D, NY), a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee. Even money used for training flights in this country can end up in open allotment funds for support and maintenance of US forces in Vietnam—or just slush around under broad headings like support and maintenance of the air force.

When Congress approves a defense budget of $77 billion, it is really providing a broad grant of executive discretion rather than a list of line-item expenditures. That, at least, is how the White House regards it, and it is not going to be easy to hold this Executive to spending solely for the purposes the appropriators originally had in mind. John Ehrlichman, the presidential assistant for domestic affairs, has told reporters that we can't look just at the law the Congress passed, we have to "learn to read all the laws." By reading all the laws, Ehrlichman comes to the conclusion that the President "has very broad powers in determining how these expenditures should be made." So great is the discretion that the Congress implicitly delegates, the reporters may have wondered why the administration bothered at all in the last Congress to seek emergency powers to limit spending.

All that the 92nd could do to override a veto and fund a water pollution program did not affect the sway of the Office of Management and Budget, which subsequently impounded six billion dollars earmarked for water treatment plants. Impoundment is not a veto; it is a "super-veto," the authority for which comes from the Anti-Deficiency Act of the 1920s giving the President some limited power to "effect savings." By impoundment, the OMB has gutted water purification, Indian health care, low interest federal loans and conservation payments to farmers, and soon, Senator Humphrey predicts, will put a lid on the school milk program. Yet, this impounding has barely dented the projected deficit, leaving six billion dollars still to shave and only six months of the fiscal year left to do it. So last week on its own the administration stopped considering all applications for low- and middle-income housing subsidies, making it impossible in many cities to build anything but luxury housing. The "temporary hold" affects ownership and subsidy programs for low-income families, new public housing projects, open space and water-and-sewer grants—not just for six months but for the next 18. To Representative William A. Barrett (D, Pa.), the chairman of the housing subcommittee of Banking and Currency, the HUD freeze is "blackmail" aimed at forcing Congress to lump model cities and urban renewal programs into a special revenue sharing package. For the poor it is another bill come due for Vietnam, "fiscal responsibility" and the tax depreciation allowance.

Last fall, when Congress defeated a White House bid for special powers to slash the budget, the legislators said they did not want spending decisions made, as Senator Charles Mathias (R, Md.) put it, "by some nameless, faceless bureaucrat not answerable to the people of America." But after all the brave words about the power of the purse, the Constitution, and even the Magna Carta, the President was allowed to fall back on the enormous prerogatives he already claimed. At least the spending ceiling Mr. Nixon demanded had a defi-

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nite limit on the amount he could cut from any one program. With impoundment he can shut down an agency. Even without impoundment, the "faceless bureaucrats" at OMB can dawdle for months as they draft and redraft the rules and regulations for the administration of almost any congressionally authorized spending.

Recently, 14 Senate chairmen intervened in a case before the US Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, disputing the President's power to hold back federal highway funds that Congress told him to spend. Because the highway trust contains a specific prohibition against impoundment, a victory here may decide nothing about the President's discretionary right to freeze housing subsidies and impound water pollution grants. That is why Senator Sam Ervin (D, NC), chairman of the Senate subcommittee on the separation of powers, promises to introduce a bill making illegal the whole practice of impoundment without explicit permission of Congress. At stake is the ability of the President to keep the war going without wrecking the economy. Should he lose his "super veto," not even price controls and high interest rates will save the administration from more inflation.

Who Faults No-Fault?

No-fault auto insurance is becoming one of those perennials like welfare reform that fades and sprouts again in each following session of Congress. Last year a federal no-fault scheme made it as far as the Senate floor before the winds of expedience beat it back to the Judiciary Committee, where it died. The vote to recommit the bill was very close, 49-46. But once the Senate leaders had voted to send it back to Judiciary, they knew there was no chance of its coming up again in 1972.

That no-fault bill, drafted by Senators Hart (D, Mich.) and Magnuson (D, Wash.) was introduced in a revised form last week. Majority Leader Mike Mansfield placed it number three on his list of "priority bills," preceded only by the list of vetoed bills from last session. This doesn't guarantee passage, but it increases the chances of survival. A companion bill has been offered by Representative John Moss (D, Calif.) in the House.

In substance, the Hart-Magnuson proposal differs little from last year's. Like the one that failed, it will require every car driver in the nation to buy some kind of no-fault insurance to protect himself and his family against medical bills and loss of wages resulting from a car accident. No-fault is another name for "first-party insurance," meaning simply that the person who buys the insurance is the only one who collects benefits from the insurer. There are no third-party payments, no attempt to fix blame; each driver in an accident sends his bills to his own insurer, regardless of who caused the accident. Under this system, most people would not buy liability insurance, and would not be protected against the costs of a lawsuit for negligent driving. For this reason, no-fault insurance cannot work unless the routine kinds of auto lawsuits are prohibited.

The Hart-Magnuson proposal therefore suspends the "tort" system for all lawsuits involving *economic* losses covered by the bill. In rare cases the injured person would be allowed to sue 1) the owner of a totally uninsured car, 2) a garage mechanic or car manufacturer whose mistake caused an accident, 3) a driver who "intentionally" causes damage, 4) a driver who damages a parked car or other property and 5) a parking garage attendant. The bill also permits lawsuits for noneconomic losses, known as compensation for "pain and suffering," if more than $5000 damage has been done. Suits in this category are permitted if a driver has caused death, "serious permanent disfigurement," "significant permanent injury," or more than six months of total inability to work.

What's new in the proposal is its language. Most of the terminology and several of the structural changes were taken from a model no-fault bill written by a conference of state insurance commissioners last August. They gathered at the request of President Nixon, who had declared himself opposed to federal action on no-fault on the grounds that state governments, not Congress, have jurisdiction over insurance. He asked the state officials to draw up a model bill, and he had Congress pass a resolution advising the states to get moving on no-fault. The result of all this was a model bill called UMVARA, the Uniform Motor Vehicle Accident Reparation Act.

The UMVARA provisions may constitute a more sweeping reform than the President bargained for. In any case, they suit the Senate and House advocates of no-fault so well that in both cases they have adopted the UMVARA model for federal law. Senators Hart and Magnuson used UMVARA as the framework of their new bill: states would have to adopt a similar version of no-fault within one legislative session after the bill's passage, or accept a federally imposed version. The secretary of Transportation would judge in each case whether or not the state system meets federal minimum standards, and in states that fail, he would impose federal regulation. This allows the states some leeway without relaxing standards that are necessary if no-fault is to work. The less flexible House bill requires states to adopt UMVARA.

No-fault insurance is an old idea that long ago would have become law except for the fact that it deprives a whole class of lawyers of their income. These men, most of whom belong to the American Trial Lawyers Association (ATLA), thrive on lawsuits generated by car accidents under the tort system. Under this system, the threat of lawsuit is often the deciding factor in

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whether or not an insurance company pays damages to the injured. A Transportation Department study shows that in 1970, Americans paid about $6.6 billion for personal liability insurance. About $1.4 billion of that total went to legal fees, one billion dollars to sales commissions and $1.4 billion to administrative costs. Although the Transportation Department estimated that "compensable damages" in this area totalled $6.8 billion, the injured received only $2.8 billion in benefits. A no-fault system would eliminate most of the $1.4 billion in legal costs, and probably reduce other administrative costs.

The Trial Lawyers Association, about 25,000 strong, takes exception to the no-fault system proposed by Hart, Magnuson and Moss. ATLA and its state affiliates are chiefly responsible for having stalled action on no-fault in many legislatures, among them Maryland, Virginia and New York. The objections they raised to the Hart-Magnuson bill last year were that it prevented "pain and suffering" lawsuits except in cases of catastrophic injury, and that it did not allow states to require drivers to buy liability insurance. This meant of course that most drivers would not buy liability insurance, and that insurers would not have to pay out large sums for pain and suffering. Though still permitted, lawsuits would not be very profitable. All of the ATLA arguments boil down to one standard complaint: that no-fault insurance upsets the system of civil justice by suspending judgment of blame.

There's not much to be said against this principle, but there's a great deal to be said against the system it supports. The Department of Transportation study shows that the average return in benefits for accident victims is 45 cents for each dollar spent on personal injury premiums. Comparable health insurance policies such as Blue Cross-Blue Shield are said to return about 93 cents on the premium dollar. Furthermore, the fault system of compensation adds to the congestion of the courts and sometimes delays payment of benefits for months. It does not aid the victims of single-car accidents or the victims of uninsured drivers.

While the Hart-Magnuson proposal will undoubtedly develop its own problems, it will at least assure every person injured in a car accident unlimited payment of medical and rehabilitation costs, reimbursement for loss of wages up to $50,000, and reasonable payments for baby sitters and other "replacement services." It compromises with the administration in adopting UMVARA and giving states a chance to design bills of their own. It compromises with ATLA in allowing pain and suffering lawsuits when a negligent driver causes serious injury. And it throws a bone to Ralph Nader in permitting suits against manufacturers and repairmen.

The bill leaves up to state commissions the problem of watching the insurance companies to prevent them from exploiting the new system for their own profit. The experience of Massachusetts and Florida, two states with strong no-fault policies, shows that large reductions in personal injury premiums can be expected. Since adopting no-fault, Massachusetts has lowered these rates on the average by 41 percent, and Florida has lowered its rates by 26 percent.

TVA and Strip Mines

The Tennessee Valley Authority is the largest single consumer of stripped coal in the nation. In 1972, it purchased more than 23 million tons, better than 10 percent of all the coal stripped in America, thus qualifying TVA as a major despoiler of the countryside in Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia and several adjoining states.

So when a vacancy turned up on the TVA's three-man board of directors in May of 1972, the opponents of stripping pressed for the appointment of a strong advocate for the environment. What they got was William L. Jenkins, 35, Tennessee's commissioner of Conservation and an ally of the stripping interests. He was sworn in as TVA director the first of November.

When environmentalists complained in 1971 about loopholes in a state law Jenkins helped write to control strip-mining in Tennessee, he charged them with trying to scuttle the measure. "We've got a real good bill here," he declared, "if the neurotics and psychotics will just trust us."

When the bill was submitted to the Tennessee General Assembly, Jenkins lobbied against any amendment to ban strip-mining within 300 feet of a stream, to require public hearings before issuance of strip-mining permits, and to a slope limitation of 15 degrees. Jenkins' lieutenants sat in the balcony during the debate and signaled legislators below how they should vote. As the legislature prepared to enact the watered-down bill, Jenkins met with some of the state's biggest coal operators to assure them the new law would not seriously hamper their activities.

He was right. The new law is a disaster. The Knoxville *News-Sentinel* called it legislation "written by stripminers for stripminers." Said the Nashville *Tennessean:* "The mountain people will be the ones who will suffer."

Like many Nixon appointees, Jenkins is a defeated Republican candidate, in this case for governor of Tennessee. Earlier, he served five years in the state legislature, establishing a record of coziness with the big coal interests. With the election of Republican Winfield Dunn as governor in 1970, Jenkins was named state commissioner of Conservation. As such he took responsibility for enforcing the state's strip-mining regulations.

In early 1972, after a three-day tour of east Tennessee, William E. Guckert, chief of the strip-mining rec-

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lamation division of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, said: "Strip mine devastation in Tennessee is a disgrace to the nation. I've never seen such irresponsibility on the part of coal operators anywhere. I felt physically sick at the destruction of that beautiful country."

The reason becomes clearer when you examine how Jenkins spent his funds at the Conservation Department. During most of his tenure, the department's strip-mining and reclamation division employed only five men, including its director. Its annual budget to police strip-mining for minerals, not just coal, throughout the state was $65,000. (The department's public relations arm, the information and tourist promotion division, had a budget of $1 million.) When legislation was proposed to place a 10 cent per ton tax on stripped coal to give Jenkins' department funds for the reclamation of abandoned strip mines, he lobbied his friends in the legislature to kill the measure. They did. Later, in an effort to quiet criticism, Jenkins hired three new inspectors. One owned 15 acres that were themselves being stripped. State records showed that the new inspector had inspected his own land.

Jenkins' term on TVA will run nine years at an annual salary of $38,000. He will hear little about the evils of strip-mining from his fellow directors—Aubrey Wagner, the chairman, and Don McBride. It was Wagner, a director since 1960, who turned the agency toward an increased reliance on stripped coal during the '60s. McBride, a former protegé of Oklahoma's Robert Kerr and a director since 1966, has concurred.

To those who recall the original goals of TVA, the arrival of Jenkins—and the recent behavior of TVA itself—are sad indeed. In 1935, when President Roosevelt signed TVA into law, the agency was hailed as the savior of the Tennessee River watershed. Through dam building and soil conservation TVA was to revitalize the region. Since the mid-'50s, however, TVA has been buying strip-mined coal, and is now the principal stimulant to the strip-mining business. Some of its own lands are being stripped. The result is irreparable damage to mountains and streams, greatly increased flooding, unemployment and community decay. The dark shadow cast by TVA extends even beyond the area it was established to serve. In order to satisfy the needs of its 11 steam plants (which provide 80 percent of its power), TVA now shops for coal outside its watershed area. It reaches as far as Illinois and Indiana, where in 1971 it consumed more than 1.5 million tons of stripped coal. From strip mines in Alabama TVA took another 650,000 tons. From Virginia came 366,000 tons more. Although it provides no power to Kentucky, two-thirds of all TVA's coal comes from that state. In 1971, it bought one-fifth of all the coal taken from Kentucky—a staggering 27 million tons, of which 16 million came from strip mines.

Hillsides and valleys are ruined forever, roads closed by rockslides, houses washed away by flash floods, vast acreage robbed of its rich topsoil, streams filled with fish killed by run-off acids, thousands of deep-miners forced out of work by bulldozers, the foundations of homes split apart by huge strip mine explosive charges. These, and not "neurotics and psychotics" are the problems Jenkins faces in his new job. As one of three men making policy for the enormously powerful TVA he will shape the lives of tens of thousands of families across Appalachia.

The Inaugural As an Art-Form

Inaugural writing is a limited art form. To qualify you have to be President, and this has happened to only 36 men in 184 years, who have delivered 46 inaugurals (I am counting Nixon twice) of which Franklin Roosevelt made four. Of the 36 Presidents, four never composed an inaugural so their presumably immortal words are unknown; they were John Tyler, Millard Fillmore, Andrew Johnson and Chester A. Arthur. They were Presidents-by-succession, not subsequently elected.

The favorite place for delivering inaugurals is on a pine platform built out from the central steps of the splendid domed Capitol facing Capitol Plaza. At such affairs it generally rains, sleets or snows. There has been no earthquake yet. It stormed so hard for Taft that he was driven inside, which was highly irregular for an outdoor sport, and it embarrassed the weather forecaster. James K. Polk took his oath in a driving rain, and William Henry (Tecumseh) Harrison perversely gave the longest inaugural in history without wearing a hat or coat and caught his death a-cold. (This was sad, because he told the nation it could judge his sincerity in "a few months"; he never lived to show them.)

The shortest inaugural was George Washington's second; I have just counted it: 133 words. All but three inaugurals (two in New York, one in Philadelphia) were given in Washington, and all but one of the latter before the Capitol. The exception was poignant, January 20, 1945—Franklin Roosevelt's fourth. He died three months later. He spoke from the portico of the White House. They lifted him up, like a sack of potatoes, but his voice was clear and happy. Here are my penciled notes from the time: *Snow in big magnolia . . . wafer of sun in clouds . . . sodden flakes, snow in crotches of trees and on yews . . . Washington Monument behind . . . tower for cameramen . . . Greek columns; green awnings with snow on lower loop . . . cheerful band music . . . clutter of mikes on lectern . . . sky dreary, one-half blue; south still lilac-gray; shadow appears even as I write this at*

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11:56 . . . drip of magnolias . . . Harry Hopkins, Jimmy Roosevelt—Wallace on left, Truman on right . . . crackly gravel below, clapping of gloved hands . . .

As an art-form, the standard inaugural is easily forgettable. It starts off on a humble, awed tone that may recall Uriah Heep. It is studded with clichés and banalities. The Government Printing Office in 1965 reprinted all the inaugurals extant in a paperback. They are exciting or dull, depending on how much history you bring to them. After rereading them all I could write a standard inaugural in my sleep.

First the reverential, humble part; the virtue of American democracy is nowhere better illustrated than in the good nature after the lively election just held. Now is the time to unite and work as a team. There is a little quiet gee-whizzing about the beauties of the American landscape and motherhood, and of how big the country has grown (my!)—but, of course, America's greatness is not dollars but spiritual values. There is a gesture to states' rights, a mandatory attack on government interference and bureaucracy. There is a careful skirting of real issues. Sometimes this is obscene, as when James Monroe boasts, "On whom has oppression fallen in any quarter of our Union?" without mentioning slavery. They all omitted slavery, those early Presidents, until the guns roared.

Most practitioners of the inaugural art urge economy and possibly a cut in taxes (Pierce promised "an observance of rigid economy"; Garfield, "rigid economy"; Cleveland, the duty of the government "to relieve the public of unnecessary taxation," and so on). Some tender-skinned new Presidents still smart from press criticism: "the artillery of the press has been leveled against us, charged with whatever its licentiousness could devise or dare" (Jefferson); "I have been the subject of abuse and slander scarcely ever equaled in political history" (Grant, 1873, whose administration was second in corruption only to Harding's).

Early Presidents had one problem that doesn't bother us, what to do with surplus. What a headache. In those artless days, the theory was that a national debt was bad and should be paid off like a farm mortgage. Jackson said he would economize "because it will facilitate the extinguishment of the national debt." And William McKinley (1897) said it was the "settled policy of the Government" to avoid "for the most part, every form of direct taxation, except in time of war."

Most Presidents address inaugurals to "fellow citizens" but not George Washington who started the thing. He addressed his remarks to "Fellow-Citizens of the Senate and of the House of Representatives." Congress was in New York, and he spoke from the balcony of the New York Federal Hall.

Congress felt it should make formal reply, the way Parliament did to the King, but when Vice President John Adams referred to "his most gracious speech," it was too much like royalty, and the phrase was stricken. The House rejected the Senate's "His highness, the President of the United States of America and Protector of their Liberties." They wound up, sensibly, "To the President of the United States."

Let me throw in a few more statistics. The first inaugural photographed as a movie was McKinley's (1897). The first inaugural locally amplified, by a contraption called a microphone, was Harding's. (People on Capitol Plaza were stunned; they could hear him.) And the first without top hats was Ike's in 1953.

It is extraordinary how the personality of particular Presidents leaps out. Jefferson was a superb stylist and philosopher; Polk solid and sensible; Teddy Roosevelt virile and robust; Taft chatty and discursive; Coolidge smug; Harding windy.

There is drama in hindsight. Here is the doomed Hoover, March 4, 1929, telling America it has the highest prosperity anywhere "in history" while the bull market roars toward its Niagara Falls in October.

Even today, Woodrow Wilson's first inaugural, which he hammered out alone in a hideaway in the stacks of the Princeton University library and showed to no one, apparently, before delivery, is electrifying—a bugle call of a speech. "The nation has been stirred by a solemn passion," he told them. "Men's hearts wait upon us; men's lives hang on the balance; men's hopes call upon us to say what we will do . . . I summon all honest men, all patriotic, all forward-looking men, to my side. God helping me, I will not fail them, if they will but counsel and sustain me!"

The most immediately effective inaugural was Roosevelt's, "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself," in 1933. The country was prostrate, banks closed; he struck a note of superb self-confidence. Second inaugurals rarely equal the first but FDR, in 1937, turned to social action: "I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished."

The greatest of all, of course, were Lincoln's. You can't read them without awe. How could the man make ordinary words work for him like that? The first was a patient, placating, lucid speech to the South, an appeal to "the better angels of our nature."

Then the sad, great, Biblical second inaugural: "Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other." And concludes, of course, "With malice toward none."

Since Roosevelt, there have been four Presidents. First Truman; with all the eulogy of the doughty little man it is a shock to reread his venomous attack on the "false philosophy" of communism; it seems a bit hysterical. Eisenhower carried the sense of imminent peril to a further pitch; it sounds like a diabolic enemy: "the designs of that power, dark in purpose . . ." It is like a medical anathema.

Then, of course, Kennedy. He was bright and vivid; the first Catholic. Earlier Presidents had gnawed at the theme of a citizen's obligation to his country; Kennedy finally got it for good, "Ask not what your

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country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." Kennedy also gave us the grandiose, "We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty." Whatever that means.

Lyndon Johnson, in a singularly humane and compassionate inaugural, launched the "Great Society."

And President Nixon? Four years ago he took the oath from Earl Warren and, at 12:16 pm, January 20, began what turned out to be a professionally polished, fairly routine inaugural of the inspirational type. There were eloquent passages; he said, "We cannot learn from one another until we stop shouting at one another." Also one prescient sentence, "After a period of confrontation, we are entering an era of negotiation." This was prophetic, indeed. It took a weatherproof Redbaiter to visit Peking and Moscow, and to ease the tension illustrated by Truman and Eisenhower. If Mr. Humphrey had been President and tried it he would have been lynched.

So now we wait Mr. Nixon's second. With the exception of General Eisenhower he is the only President since Zachary Taylor to get elected with a hostile Congress. I turned back to President Taylor but he was no help. He was a simple, honest soldier favoring "speedy extinguishment of the public debt." His spoils system cost Nathaniel Hawthorne his place in the Salem custom house (then he wrote *The Scarlet Letter*), Walt Whitman lost his place with an unsuccessful Democratic newspaper, and wrote *Leaves of Grass*. Those were the chief results of the 1848 election.

Maybe Mr. Nixon will break silence about his Twelve-Days-of-Christmas Hanoi bombing. Maybe he will give us another "lift of a driving dream" (or was it the "drive of a lifting dream"?). We must wait and see.

Richard L. Strout

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Keeping Senate Traffic Moving

The Efficiency Byrd

A short time after he unseated Senator Ted Kennedy as majority whip in January of 1971, Senator Robert Byrd (D, WVa) summoned the staffs of his colleagues to brief them on new rules he was instituting. He opened with a lengthy discourse on "the decorum" of the Senate, a favorite Byrd theme and one he has used over and over to explain why he has curbed the access of staff members to the floor, turned the famed "morning hour" into a series of short, prepared statements and otherwise busied himself tidying up the sloppy work habits of the world's most prestigious legislative body. To enforce his new rules, Byrd haunts the floor of the Senate every moment it is in session—a stern, thin-lipped traffic cop keeping things moving orderly through his intersection.

Under his new rules, now in effect two years, staff members can come to the floor only if their member is present. When the bell rings for a roll call, all staff members except those of the committee which reported the bill are shooed into the staff gallery upstairs. If a member wants a key aide at his side, he must rise and ask unanimous consent, a concession of dependence members aren't apt to make very regularly. As for the morning hour, designed as a free forum, time must now be scheduled in advance and members aren't allowed to run over. Byrd works hard to get unanimous consent in advance to limit debate on bills headed for the floor, once asking such consent for an appropriations bill still in committee.

Byrd has outraged the influential bipartisan network of liberal staff people who had made effective use of their floor privileges. Often, they sat in for their member as a "floor watcher" to be on hand when the roll call came along and to brief him on the effect of some complicated amendment. Now, they must watch from the gallery and take their chances on which of four entrances their man might be using that day. This, in turn, forces senators tied up in committee meetings to rely more heavily on the leadership (*i.e.*, Byrd) for guidance, particularly if a gutting amendment is up for a vote. Byrd has studied their voting patterns and tries to steer them in their own direction with a "this is a no (or yes) for you." To be thus served strikes many in that august body as the natural state of things, despite awkward moments, such as the day a senator rose to ask unanimous permission for an assistant to join him during a roll call and then forgot the aide's name.

In the old days, the free-wheeling speeches of the morning hour often turned into rousing debates, spontaneous colloquy that helped more than one senator sort out his thoughts on an important issue. Now he must sign up for so many minutes and that calls for a prepared text and no interruptions. To quote one staffer, the result is less freedom of debate: "The great strength of the Senate is the right to go to the floor and speak for four hours." Senators still can—at the end of the day—but not as effectively. Between the unanimous consent agreements Byrd pursues so assiduously and the parceled-out time during the morning hours, the spontaneity is gradually being choked off.

Because Byrd is willing to "carry the garbage," as one observer put it (Kennedy could scarcely bear to stay on the floor during the long hours of haggling), no attempt was made to unseat him this month. Yet, there are danger signals ahead. Byrd aspires to real authority—the majority leader's post with its extraor-

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dinary powers in deciding which bills flow into that intersection he now guards. He wants to be the chief.

Mansfield doesn't exercise that power as often as many would like, but one example of a time he did suffices to give an idea of the power Byrd seeks. It was 1970 and the Senate faced two tough fights—the extension of the Voting Rights Act and the Carswell confirmation fight. Which should come first—Voting Rights, which the southern bloc was set to filibuster, or Carswell, whose stock was falling day by day? Mansfield brought up the Voting Rights Act and the southern bloc, alarmed over the slippage of Carswell's support, gave way and it passed. Then Carswell lost.

A Byrd critic quips that he "makes the most out of the least of any man I know," but they have to admit he's efficient and doesn't approach his job with an ideological bias. He may curb the floor rights of staffers but he consults them daily on the plans of their bosses, itself a heady experience for some. He may seek to limit debate, but in the fight over banning imports of Rhodesian chrome, it may have turned the tide. On that occasion, a move to strike a proposed ban passed by one vote and Byrd cut off debate on a motion to reconsider on the grounds the Senate was working under a unanimous consent agreement. It caused Senator Fulbright, anxious to stall a vote on reconsideration until the next day in the hope of rounding up a couple more votes, to complain about what was happening to the Senate.

It's generally assumed Senator Mansfield, who'll be 70 in March, won't seek reelection as majority leader in 1976. Byrd is without pride in his efforts to line up support for the job, particularly from a swing group of about a dozen senators. All kinds of stories float around Capitol Hill—of Byrd pestering a reluctant senator to set a date for the senator and his wife to join the Byrds for dinner ("can't take no for an answer"), of Byrd calling a promising candidate during the campaign and offering him money if he'd pledge his vote to Byrd for majority leader, of Byrd storing up his chits as he moves about the floor being helpful.

So far, Byrd's voting record hasn't been affected much by his role as party whip. Americans for Democratic Action gave him a 35 in 1972 compared to 36 in 1965. Americans for Constitutional Action like him a little better: they gave him a 50 in 1972 (his high in recent years was 63 in 1968)—up from 31 in 1966 and 38 in 1967, the years when LBJ was pushing his Great Society programs through Congress. Over the years, Byrd has compiled a pretty good COPE rating—74 right and 41 wrong since he entered the House after the 1952 elections. His 1972 score is interesting. COPE found him right on seven out of 10 votes, but his three minuses were on critical social issues—child day care services, equal employment opportunities and busing. He was right on traditional labor issues plus no-fault insurance, the latter interesting because he has yet to fail Commerce Committee Chairman Warren Magnuson on a consumer vote.

He has drawn some praise for his work on the HEW appropriations subcommittee, where his commitment to medical research comes into play. As a conferee, he usually stands firm for the Senate version against the niggardly attitude of House conferees who resent any Senate attempt to boost their figures. But persons with an interest in matters relating to HEW have praised Byrd and his staff (Joe Stewart, one-time buddy of Bobby Baker, helps him) for a "no nonsense" attitude: "They're effective. They do the job and then move on to the next one."

If Byrd's 56 Democratic colleagues had to replace Mansfield today, Byrd probably would have a tough time beating Senator Humphrey, who showed during his years in the whip's job (1961-65) that a man committed to progressive ideas can make friends and still provide substantive leadership. Few will deny that Humphrey peaked as a public servant during those long, arduous hours on the Senate floor in 1964 when he provided inspirational leadership in the test ban and civil rights fights. It's hard to imagine Byrd in that role, either as whip or as majority leader. Passing years take a toll, particularly on a man like Humphrey who has been in the middle of a party-splitting fight in two presidential campaigns. If the toll is too heavy, the world's most prestigious government body may decide to promote the man who made them clean up some of their sloppy work habits, catered to their whims and kept the traffic moving.

Paul R. Wieck

The Nixon Watch

Changing the Players

After four years of fussing with the structures and processes of the federal government, with particular attention to the White House organization at the top of it, Mr. Nixon said on January 5, in a statement which may be read as a restrained confession of miscalculation and deficiency in his first term, that one of his important purposes at the beginning of his second term is to get his administration in shape to "do a better job of managing the affairs of government over the next four years." His endeavor to accomplish this by means of reorganization, outright firings, accepted resignations, the reassignment of some officials and the recruitment of new ones isn't finished yet, six weeks after the President announced the start of it. But it is far enough along for an appraisal. My appraisal, no doubt influenced by a bias in favor of officials who care more about their use of power and responsibility than they do about the instruments of power, is that the latest

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Nixon exercise in governmental reform and invigoration has turned out to be considerably more substantial in terms of the number and sweep of the changes involved, and even less meaningful in terms of probable result, than I expected it to be when I characterized it in previous reports as a charade undertaken largely for public effect.

Between November 28, a day after the President declared his intention to imbue his approaching second term with the kind of "vitality and excitement" that "a second administration usually lacks," and December 22, when the carefully paced announcements of changes at Cabinet, sub-Cabinet, White House and bureau levels tailed off for awhile, 57 resignations and retirements and 87 nominations, appointments and decisions to retain officials in their present positions were disclosed. Thirty nominations to jobs of sufficient importance to require Senate confirmation were sent to the 93rd Congress the day it convened. Six of the 11 departments got new Secretaries. Three of these nominees were new to government, three were already in the administration. Five of the President's White House assistants were nominated to be departmental under secretaries and assistant secretaries and agency heads. Elliot Richardson, the secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare replaced Defense Secretary Melvin Laird. HEW's under secretary, two assistant secretaries and four of its divisional administrators, including the entire directorate of its health services, were replaced. The secretary, an under secretary, three assistant secretaries and two administrators left the Labor Department and Peter Brennan, a New York construction union leader, was installed at its head. James R. Schlesinger, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, replaced Richard Helms at the head of the Central Intelligence Agency. Kenneth Rush, the deputy secretary of Defense, moved to the State Department to be its deputy secretary under William P. Rogers, who is expected to stay another year or so and then resign. And so it went, in a swift realignment without remembered precedent in a transition from a reelected President's first term to his second term. Richard Nixon amply fulfilled and in early January was still fulfilling his promise to change "some of the players" on his team and thus combat what he called "the tendency . . . for an administration to run out of steam after the first four years and then to coast, and usually coast downhill." Without change on the scale he promised and proceeded to impose, he said, both elected and appointed officials become "prisoners" of the bureaucracy "they are supposed to run" and fail in their duty to follow "the directions that the people want them to follow."

There can be no quarrel with the proposition that officials tend to go stale in office, though Mr. Nixon would have vigorously rebutted the argument if it had been applied to him in his bid for a second term. But the observer of the Nixon exercise is entitled to wonder whether the patent showmanship displayed in it doesn't explain a lot of it and whether the obvious loss in continuity and experience won't in the long run outweigh whatever gains in vigor and fresh outlook the President may get from it all. Elliot Richardson, for instance, indicated when his transfer from HEW to Defense was announced that he would have preferred to stay awhile with the organizational monster that he had been slowly mastering since he took charge of it in 1970. It's understood that he could have remained at HEW if he had insisted. But he is sufficiently versed in the ways and quirks of Mr. Nixon to know that he would have been in for an unhappy time if he had insisted. The President resents and does not forget resistance to his wishes in such matters, and Richardson is said to have understood that the real choice before him was to move over to Defense, as Mr. Nixon asked, or to leave the public service. Kenneth Rush, the deputy secretary of Defense, similarly indicated that he would have preferred to become secretary of Defense instead of deputy secretary of State. He gave an impression that he complied with the President's wish in much the same spirit of doubting obedience that prevailed in Elliot Richardson's case.

Two brief passages in a lengthy message on governmental reorganization that the President sent to Congress in March, 1971, justify a more serious doubt that the reasoning behind Mr. Nixon's approach to government is as sound and thoroughly thought out as he makes it appear to be. This was the message in which he proposed to consolidate seven federal departments and the functions of several independent agencies into four "goal-oriented" departments of Human Resources, Natural Resources, Community Development and Economic Affairs. It was and still is the President's major attempt to bring into "the affairs of government" that condition of ordered neatness and precision which he yearns and strives to attain. He has said that he will ask a hitherto indifferent Congress to enact his great consolidation, with some revisions, at the 1972-73 session. The two passages that invite doubt and wonder have the President saying that "Good people cannot do good things with bad mechanisms" and that "the major cause of the ineffectiveness of government is not a matter of men or money. It is principally a matter of machinery."

Now, it may be presumptuous of a journalist to question the managerial wisdom of a President who has been in and out of public office since 1946 and of the array of organizational experts—chief among them Roy Ash, the former president of troubled Litton Industries and Mr. Nixon's new director of the Office of Management and Budget—who devised the consolidation. But the quoted passages suggest to me that Mr. Nixon and his experts, notably Mr. Ash, let their preoccupation with the "machinery" blind them to the nature and purpose of government. Good people do

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good things with bad mechanisms all the time. If they didn't and couldn't, the federal government would be in sadder shape than Mr. Nixon supposes it to be. Whether government is effective or ineffective is not "principally a matter of machinery." It is a matter of the will, or lack of will, of the people who head and run government, beginning of course with the President, to recognize the needs of the society and to provide the measures and means, including money, that must be provided if the needs are to be met. Preoccupation with machinery, in the degree that Mr. Nixon is preoccupied with it, can be a cover for inability or unwillingness to recognize and face up to and meet the needs.

Mr. Nixon has just disclosed a scheme to accomplish part of his departmental consolidation by executive fiat and action. He is giving three of his Cabinet secretaries (Earl Butz at Agriculture, James T. Lynn at Housing and Urban Development, Caspar Weinberger at HEW) the added titles and prestige of Counsellors to the President, installing them across the way from the White House, and charging them with coordinating policy formulation and, to some extent, departmental administration in the areas of natural resources, community development and human resources. Mr. Nixon has tried the same approach twice before, with White House assistants doing the coordinating, and it hasn't worked to the President's satisfaction. He seems to think it will, this time. What I need, I reckon, is his faith in machinery.

John Osborne

An Interview with Oriana Fallaci

THIEU

My appointment with Nguyen Van Thieu was at eight in the morning on Saturday, December 30, at the presidential palace in Saigon. Exactly at eight, not one minute more, not one minute less, Thieu entered the room where I was waiting with his cousin and special adviser, Hoang Duc Nha, and with the photographer Gianfranco Moroldo. The interview that followed was conducted in French.

Oriana Fallaci: President Thieu, it is no longer a secret that you and the Americans are now more enemies than friends. What has happened in the last months and weeks, including the visit of General Haig, leaves room for such speculation. I would like to know how you feel about this.

Nguyen Van Thieu: Mademoiselle, I am not so mysterious as many believe. On the contrary, I'm a very open man. I hide nothing, even on political matters, and I don't listen to those who advise me: "You shouldn't always tell what you think! Sometimes you should say the opposite!" To them I answer: "One must tell things loud and clear." But when we come to the subject you mention I have to recall that I represent South Vietnam. As President Thieu I cannot afford the luxury of being an open enemy of the United States, which is still my friend, my ally. I promised President Nixon that, even if there were things we didn't understand about each other, we would remain allies and not consider each other enemies. Between man and wife there are fights, yet they don't necessarily become enemies because of that. Moreover, their fights must take place in the bedroom, after the door has been locked. They must never take place in front of the children. Children should never see their parents flying into rages. With friends it's the same. It is in my interest, in the American government's interest, to avoid any public disagreement, because the Communists take advantage of it.

Q: I understand, of course. Yet, when I interviewed Dr. Kissinger, I had the impression that your meetings with him had been rather dramatic. I am surprised to find such an absence of rancor in you.

A: You know, one must be able to forget. When one makes the politics of a country, he must not harbor any rancor. My discussions with Dr. Kissinger were very frank indeed. At moments, I could say, they were very hard. However, they were also friendly; we must deal as friends. After Dr. Kissinger's departure, all the jour-

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nalists in Saigon asked me: "What about the disagreement?" And I answered: "When you talk about the disagreement, you must talk about the agreement. We have agreements and disagreements." Mademoiselle, I have said "no" to the Americans. What else do you want? When I say no, it's no. But the moment has not come as yet to say "no" openly, because not all is lost. There are still hopes for peace. I still trust that peace will come. Perhaps it's a matter of weeks. Perhaps a month. We shouldn't despair.

Q: Then it's true that your "no" might be a "no" in the Vietnamese way. I mean a "no" which is a "yes."

A: Absolutely untrue. I repeat: When I say no, it's no. And when I say "I don't agree with you, *Messieurs les Américains,* though I remain your friend," I mean that I do not agree. I always thought that Dr. Kissinger, as principal negotiator acting on behalf of President Nixon, should feel the duty of consulting us and of unifying our point of view with the point of view of the United States. I always expected the government of the United States to support our opinions and cooperate with us in asking the Communists to modify their demands. And I can tell you that there are two main points, two fundamental principles, that Dr. Kissinger was ready to accept but I did not accept. One is the presence of the North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam, the other is the political formula that they want to impose on the future of South Vietnam. Like the whole agreement, those two points were conceived by the Communists in Paris, so I told Dr. Kissinger that accepting them would mean submitting to the North Vietnamese demands. What the North Vietnamese demand, is the loss of South Vietnam, the end of South Vietnam.

Q: Could you explain your refusal, President Thieu?

A: Mademoiselle, *c'est simple.* The Americans say there are 145,000 North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam; I say 300,000 and perhaps many more. Anyhow, officially accepting the presence of 300,000 North Vietnamese troops by a juridical agreement, ratified by an international conference, is absolutely unacceptable. Because it's like recognizing their right to call themselves liberators, their right to say that Vietnam is one country, from Hanoi to Saigon, and that this one Vietnam belongs to Hanoi, not to Saigon. Do I make myself clear? What I maintain is that accepting an army of 300,000 men inside a country means to recognize the sovereignty of that army over that country. It means considering the North Vietnamese as liberators instead of aggressors, thus reversing the roles. Consequently it means considering the South Vietnamese army as a mercenary of the Americans. In fact this is what I said to Dr. Kissinger: "Dr. Kissinger, in doing so you put the legal government of South Vietnam in the position of a puppet government installed by the Americans!"

Q: But the North Vietnamese would soon withdraw, wouldn't they?

A: The agreement doesn't say it. It doesn't. That is why I say to them [the North Vietnamese]: "Let us be honest. If you haven't something hidden in mind, if you don't want to renew your aggression against South Vietnam, why do you insist on leaving an army here? You demand that the American troops retire within 60 days. So we should kick out allies and keep the real aggressor in the South! It's ridiculous, nonsense!"

Q: But why are you afraid of them, since you have an army of one million soldiers?

A: Voilà la question. Everybody asks the same thing: "If you are so strong militarily and politically, why do you worry?" I'll tell you why. You know, it isn't difficult for the North Vietnamese to learn the southern accent and to look like the southerners. They are Vietnamese, too; they are not recognizable like the Americans. And didn't they play the same trick with the Pathet Lao? In 1962, when all the Americans left Laos, from the first general to the last soldier, the Americans went to the airport . . . in fact we even knew the number: 48 men. The North Vietnamese stayed in the jungle, disguised as Pathet Lao, speaking as Pathet Lao, and no control commission has ever been able to check until today how many there were. Here it would be exactly the same; it's their system. They learn the accent of the South; they spread through the villages; they infiltrate all the guerrilla units, and instead of 300,000 soldiers they soon become 300,000 political cadres ready to assemble again in a regular army. *Messieurs les Américains,* is it acceptable? Listen, I'll give you an example. When a thief is caught in your house, either you call the police or you say: "Let me fix this thing myself. I'll drive him out or make a deal with him." But if the police arrive and say "Come on, make peace with this thief; you must accept the fact that the thief is in your house; you must sign in order to legalize his presence here!" then . . . then you answer: "*Monsieur le policier, qu'est-ce que c'est que ça?* First you told me that I had to fight the thief, and that you would help me fight the thief, and now you tell me that I have to accept the thief? How come? You were so afraid of this thief and now you are not afraid of him, now you ask me to authorize him to steal in my house?!" *Mais alors! C'est trop!*

Q: It makes you really angry, doesn't it?

A: Bien sûr, Mademoiselle! Because what kind of peace is a peace that gives the North Vietnamese the right to keep their troops here? What kind of treaty is a treaty that legalizes their presence here de facto? I offered another solution, though to my disadvantage. I said: "Let the North Vietnamese withdraw at the same time the

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American troops withdraw. And after they are gone, I promise to demobilize the same number of troops withdrawn by the North Vietnamese. If they withdraw 300,000, for instance, I cut down 300,000 from my army. Well, it seems to me reasonable. It seems to me logical, and also a sign of good will. Why don't they accept it? I'll tell you why. Because they want to end it all in bloodshed.

Q: So you too believe that bloodshed would come with a cease-fire.

A: Of course. It's inevitable. You must not listen to what Pham Van Dong [premier of North Vietnam] says in interviews or in his propaganda. When Pham Van Dong declares that the North Vietnamese don't advocate the invasion of South Vietnam, or a Communist government in South Vietnam, or bloodshed in South Vietnam, he speaks only to quiet the Americans. Let's not forget the bloodshed around Quang Tri, around An Loc, or on Route Number One that now is called the Horror Street. And what did they do in 1968, at Hue and elsewhere, during the Tet Offensive? What did they do in Hanoi when they got power? Have you any idea of the people they killed with their revolution? I discussed this with Kissinger. I told him: "Would we have fought 18 years, would we have sacrificed hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians in order to have one million heads cut off? Mademoiselle! Of course I would like to go down in history as the man who brought peace. Of course! But if I had signed what Kissinger wanted, within six months there would be bloodshed. I don't care about the people who would applaud me at the moment: "Bravo, bravo! *Vive la paix!*" I care about what happens later.

Q: Then how do you explain the mistake, or what you judge a mistake, made by Kissinger and by President Nixon?

A: They were too impatient to get a peace, too impatient to negotiate and sign. When you negotiate with the Communists, you shouldn't fix a deadline. You must not tell them that you want to repatriate the prisoners as soon as possible, to bring peace as soon as possible. Otherwise they exploit you. I mean, you candidly say: "Prisoners must come back home before Christmas. Peace must be reached before the end of the presidential term . . . before the elections . . . before the New Year . . . before I don't know what." This is a mistake, because they know the Western mentality and Western democracy! As a result, they blackmail you. If the President of the United States promises a deadline, of course the whole world is going to watch him. Of course his Congress is going to force him to keep his promise. And what do the Communists gain from that? They are able to demonstrate that President Nixon is incapable of bringing peace within the date he himself fixed. Fixed himself! Consequently they exploit the opposition to the President; they discredit his government. So I said to the Americans: "Be patient. One must be patient with the Communists, more patient than they are!" No use.

Q: In other words, you anticipated just what has happened.

A: C'est normal, Mademoiselle! North or South, we are all Vietnamese and I know the Vietnamese! Look, when the peace talks were opened in Paris in 1968, some people asked me: "Mr. Thieu, when do you think that they're going to reach agreement?" And I answered: "Oh! *Vous savez* . . . if the Communists agree to negotiate, it means that they need to negotiate and not that they have the good will to negotiate. What they want isn't peace; it's to have the bombings suspended, in order to have a breathing spell, reorganize, and launch another offensive. They hope to impose upon us a new Dien Bien Phu." It is more or less what they did when they accepted the Geneva agreement of 1954. At Geneva they continually tried to gain time; they played the same game they have now been playing in Paris for four years. After Dien Bien Phu, they started going very fast and turned the clock back. Had Dien Bien Phu not taken place, the Geneva conference would have lasted until today.

Q: President Thieu, allow me to believe that your advice to be patient wasn't the only thing you said to Henry Kissinger. Allow me to believe that impatience is not the only thing you have to reproach him with.

A: It isn't. *Et voilà* what I told the Americans: "You're a giant; you don't care about anything because you have nothing to be afraid of. You weigh 200 pounds, and if you swallow a pill which is bad for your health, nothing happens to you. I am a small man, however, and maybe . . . *un peu malade.* I only weigh 100 pounds, and if I swallow the same pill, I might die. You are a boxing champion. You walk in the street with your large shoulders and you're so strong that if someone kicks you in the stomach you don't even wobble; at the most, you turn with a smile of contempt. I'm a poor boxer, and maybe I am not a boxer at all because my physique is so frail. If someone kicks me in the stomach I fall to the ground. So you can probably afford the luxury of being easy in this agreement. I cannot. A bad agreement means nothing to you. To me, it's a matter of life and death. What do these 300,000 North Vietnamese mean to you? Nothing. What is the loss of South Vietnam if you look at it on the world's map? Just a speck. The loss of South Vietnam may even be good for you, sure! It may be good to contain China, good for your world strategy. But for me, *Messieurs les Américains,* it's different. Because for me, for us, it isn't a question of choosing between Moscow and Peking. It's a question of choosing between life and death."

Q: I wonder what Dr. Kissinger answered or, at least,

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what he thought.

A: Mademoiselle . . . his strategic conception of the world is very smart: a Southeast Asia controlled by the Russians, or an Indochina controlled by the Russians, in order to control and contain China. Russians are less dangerous than the Chinese, so it's necessary to ask the Russians to contain the Chinese and to pose Indochina as a threat to the south of China . . . *Très bon, très bon!* Very good! It's like a general who observes the map and marks the map here and there with his pen. But the poor captain who leads his men through rivers and woods, and goes up the hills, comes down the hills, shoots and is shot . . . no, for him it's no good. A little Vietnamese doesn't play with a strategic map of the world. He has no group-interest on this planet. He has nothing to exchange, no Middle East to exchange with Vietnam, no Germany to exchange with Japan; he has nothing but life and death for 17 million inhabitants! And his danger is to fall under the sway of Hanoi, or of Moscow and Peking, because it is the same thing. *Voilà le probleme, Messieurs les Américains!* You look very far, too far. We cannot. You aren't only a great champion, a giant; you are a powerful businessman and you can afford to say: "I have paid this one dollar. But I need to exchange it, and business is business, money counts for nothing, *allez oop!* I accept recouping ten cents from that dollar. The 90 cents I lose . . . who cares? *C'est rien. Rien du tout!*" For me it isn't so. If I pay one dollar for this cigar, I must resell it for one dollar and 10 cents. I need those 10 cents to feed my children. We're a small country, dear American friends. Our problem is survival, not the worldly interests of the great powers. Oh, these great powers who divide the world among themselves! They have free trade everywhere, and who cares if this costs the life of a small country?

Q: In other words, President Thieu, your opinion is that Dr. Kissinger was going to sell South Vietnam in the interest of his world strategy.

A: Et bien, I don't know if that was his intention. Maybe he thought in complete good faith that it was a good agreement, a right agreement. But I know that for us it was a matter of survival, to be or not to be. And this is what I said to him: "To be or not to be. This is the problem for us!"

Q: And you won. At least for the moment. Your "no" stopped that agreement. At least for the moment. But for how long? What if the Americans decide to sign alone, without you? It was clearly said in Henry Kissinger's last press conference: "We want to leave no doubt about the fact that if an agreement is reached that meets the stated conditions of the President—if an agreement is reached that we consider just—that no other party will have a veto over our action."

A: First of all, sign what? If they [the Americans] had wanted to sign, they would already have signed. They wouldn't have waited until today. The fact that they haven't signed by the date they had fixed, with or without the consent of South Vietnam, permits me to conclude that President Nixon thought it over and realized that signing such an agreement would have meant abandoning South Vietnam. But I want to give you an answer on a more fundamental matter, because you are not the first person who has asked, "If the United States abandons you, what happens to you?" My answer is straight: "I guess that we will fight until the last bullet and then the Communists will conquer us." *Bien sûr,* no doubt. The French abandoned us in 1954, and because of that, half of Vietnam fell to the Communists. If the United States does the same thing now, the other half of Vietnam will go. The Chinese and the Russians, in fact, will not leave us alone once the Americans have departed with a signed agreement. And where is another power who could help us as the United States did? There would be other countries, perhaps, but they wouldn't have the capabilities of the United States. Yes, if the United States abandons us, it's the end, the absolute end, and we have nothing to discuss any more. Remember Tibet? What happened in Tibet? Nobody intervened, not even the UN, and now Tibet is under the Communists. I mean . . . it has happened other times in history: when a country cannot resist an invader, it simply lets the invader invade.

Q: Do you feel you have relied too much on the Americans, President Thieu?

A: Mademoiselle, I cannot use those words yet! The moment hasn't come yet for me to say "I'm abandoned"! I go on explaining my opinion to the Americans who see things in too large a frame, too distantly, and . . . Did I have to rely too heavily on the Americans? Mademoiselle, had you been in my place, you would have done the same! In order to preserve its independence, a small country like mine needs everything, from military aid to economic aid. It cannot help relying on a friend. So yes, I did trust the Americans very much, I still do, till the day they abandon me. One must trust his friends as one does his wife, and the trust must be reciprocal. Until the day I abandon my wife or my wife abandons me and we get a divorce, the trust must remain.

Q: Certainly, the trust must have been there when the bombing of Hanoi was resumed. In fact many people said: "Thieu must be drinking champagne at this news!" President Thieu, what did you feel when the bombing of North Vietnam was resumed?

A: Let me say something first. Nobody loves war, and I don't love war. The fact of having been obliged to make war did not give me any joy. So the bombing of Hanoi is painful, like the rockets against Saigon. But

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frankly, now that the war has been imposed on us, we must do it. And, should the bombing stop again, I would ask Mr. Nixon: "Why? What do you get by that? Did you get something?" No, I am not against the end of bombing. But even bombing is useful, and when the purpose isn't reached, it's better to bomb. In fact . . . I now speak as a military man . . . the shorter a war is, the less atrocious it is.

Q: That's what is said by the advocates of the atomic bomb.

A: No, I don't advocate the atomic bomb. I don't mean the atomic bomb. I mean . . . Have you ever heard of gradualism? Well, in my opinion, gradualism is not the way to cure an illness. Especially when the illness lasts so long, there is no sense in prolonging the pain, it's better to stop it quickly. Now follow me. A war is like an illness. You don't like it, but you have to bear it, so stop it fast, not gradually. The gradualism of President Johnson in the Vietnam war was untenable. He never realized this simple truth: either you make a war or you don't. The gradualism we went through after Johnson was more or less the same. For years they bomb, they stop bombing, they bomb again, they reduce, they escalate, they reduce, over the 20th parallel, under the 20th parallel . . . what's that?! A war? Mademoiselle, that's not war. *Cela n'est pas la guerre, c'est une demie guerre.* That's half a war. Until today we have had a *demie guerre,* half a war. I say, had we attacked North Vietnam with a classical war, had we bombed North Vietnam continuously, had we landed in North Vietnam, the war would be over by now. I said landed, yes, I'm a military man. And as a military man I say that if peace fails and we want to end this war, we must bring the war to North Vietnam. In all possible ways, including landing.

Q: Do you mean that landing troops [in North Vietnam] is still a possible step?

A: Why not, if the Americans want it? If it isn't possible for the Americans, it isn't possible for anybody. But now let me explain what I mean. When I was Minister of Defense and the Americans started the bombing, in June 1965, some American asked me: "*Monsieur le ministre,* do you think that the bombings will stop the war in three months?" And I answered: "This depends on you. You are a great champion and you have to deal with a little fighter, that is North Vietnam. If you want, you can knock your enemy down in the first round. If you don't want to do that, if you prolong the match till the ninth round, the audience can get discouraged and ask for its money back. But there is something worse, dear American friends. Suppose you get a cramp while prolonging the match. Then the little fighter could even beat you. OK? Then go and fight him as a real champion. Knock him down in the first round. Stop it fast. If you bomb intermittently, if you make a gradual war, you'll never end it. On the contrary, you'll give Giap the argument that his small country can resist American power. Because if Giap can resist three months, your bombing will only serve to encourage his army. They are going to test you, *Messieurs les Américains.* Don't bomb for the form, bomb for the bombing. Don't make a moral or psychological war, make war." Mademoiselle . . . I too have been under American bombs, in 1942, when we had the Japanese. And I tell you that it isn't so difficult to bear the bombing. After a while you get used to it, especially if you have good shelters. At the first bombs, the North Vietnamese were completely discouraged; their morale was low; the population expected a landing. And had the Americans persisted, in 1966 the war would have been over. But the Americans do not persist. They kill for five minutes; then they give four minutes breathing space; then they kill again.

Q: President Thieu, let me be naive, or simply human. Don't you feel uneasy in the face of those bombings? Aren't those who die in Hanoi Vietnamese like you?

A: Mademoiselle . . . I know very well that they are Vietnamese like me. Deep in my heart, I don't like it. But I also know that to stop the war we have to bomb them. I also know that the end of the war will be the end of the war for the North as well as for the South. The North Vietnamese don't suffer only from the bombs. They suffer, for instance, by bearing the load of an expeditionary corps in the South. They are short of food because of that expeditionary corps in the South. They are short of enthusiasm because of the losses of that expeditionary corps in the South. Do you know how many North Vietnamese they have lost in the South along with the Vietcong? One million fifty-seven thousand men since 1964. Look, I have it in my secret documents. Finally, they suffer for a regime that has nothing to do with their way of life. Communism isn't good for the Vietnamese. I tell you that in North Vietnam only a few million out of 20 million are Communists. The rest simply bow to the Communists, and should we ever land in North Vietnam, the great majority would rebel against its government.

Q: Which seems unlikely [the landing], with all the problems that Nixon must face with the Congress, the Senate, the Americans who have had enough of this war and ask him to drop you, President Thieu, or simply sign a peace with Hanoi.

A: That's another thing. I know Nixon's problems. In fact I was the first to applaud his doctrine. In June 1969, when I toured South Korea and Taiwan, and the Americans had already announced the beginning of their withdrawal, Chiang Kai-shek and Chung Hee Park asked me: "What's happening? Why do you accept that? Why don't you tell the Americans to keep their troops until the end of the war?" And I answered: "It isn't a question of preventing the Americans from

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withdrawing their troops. It's a question of finding a solution to replace them with an army of my own, that is the army I should have had before." Yes, Mademoiselle. In 1954, after the departure of the French, the Americans had seen far enough to understand that the North Vietnamese would attack us as the North Koreans had attacked South Korea. And had they given us an army, then we wouldn't have been obliged to ask them to come here. That request was made to resolve an immediate problem. But then I saw two American Presidents risk being crushed by being involved in Vietnam and I said: "Help us to help you. Give us a strong army, let us fight all alone." I agreed with Nixon on Vietnamization, and he started Vietnamization; he withdrew his troops; and when before in the history of war have we seen an army of half a million withdrawn in four years? Now only the air force is left. And Vietnamization has worked marvelously, as the Americans also say, and everything has worked out as I said. I had even said that in 1972, before the American elections, the North Vietnamese would attack again. And then I said, as I still say, that they will attack again in 1973 . . .

Q: President Thieu, forgive me for interrupting you. But I am not sure that the Americans consider Vietnamization a great success. During last spring's offensive, had it not been for American air power, the North Vietnamese would have won.

A: Oui, d'accord. But Vietnamization cannot be accomplished in one day, Mademoiselle. Not even in one year. It was supposed to take five or seven years, so its last round hasn't taken place yet. Yes, it's true: had it not been for American air power, we wouldn't have been able to defend ourselves in the Easter offensive. But who took back Quang Tri and Binh Dinh? Who stopped the North Vietnamese at An Loc and Kontum? The Americans, perhaps? As I said, Vietnamization will be completed only when the reinforcement of our air force has occurred.

Q: What reinforcement, President Thieu? What are you without? You're full of airplanes, helicopters, air cargo planes, and the North Vietnamese have practically none. When one gets to Bien Hoa or to the Saigon airport . . .

A: We lack pilots, Mademoiselle. We lack technicians. We still have to train them. It takes two years to do so. If we didn't do it before, it was because we had certain priorities, and the first priority was the modernization of the ground forces. I had foreseen this precisely. That is why I knew we wouldn't be ready before 1973 at the earliest. That is why the Communists demand the suppression of the Vietnamization and are afraid of it. Have you an idea of how long it takes to make a modern army?

Q: I do. Yet I don't understand. Somehow we began talking about peace and now we're again speaking about war. President Thieu, do you want to stop this war or do you want to win this war?

A: I want to stop it, Mademoiselle. Unlike Giap, I don't look for victories. And as a military man, not as a politician, I can even add: what do we win with this war? Suppose we sign a peace treaty tomorrow, what will we have won in South Vietnam? I tell you what: inflation, hundreds of thousands dead, God knows how many cities destroyed, one million refugees, one million men in the army to pay each month. . . . Having the war in our own country already means losing the war, even if a victory is signed on paper. The art of war is to take the war outside your own country; it is to destroy in the enemy's territory, as Giap would explain to you. And in that sense, he could well say he has won the war in South Vietnam. I go back to my example. Suppose we sign a peace treaty tomorrow, would we have won in North Vietnam? No. We would not gain a yard of their territory, or a seat in their government. We would have conquered nothing, nothing. We would have lost to buy peace. We want peace, not their territory or their government, Mademoiselle! They call me intransigent. How can they call intransigent a man who is ready to negotiate with the NLF, a man who is ready to resign and in any case would resign one month before the elections? Is Pham Van Dong, is Le Duan, is Nguyen Vo Giap ready to negotiate with me? Would they ever resign?

Q: So how long will this war last? Weeks? Months? Years?

A: Did you put this question to Giap?

Q: Yes, but almost four years ago.

A: What did he answer?

Q: He said it could last as long as 20 years.

A: Voilà la réponse, Mademoiselle. This war is going to last till the day he decides, that is, as long as he wants to impose it on us. If I could bring the war to North Vietnam, as militarily I would like, then you could ask me that question and get the right answer. Since Giap is bringing war to South Vietnam, I only can give you an opinion. Either peace comes within a few weeks, let's say a month, or the war will last three or four more years. Mademoiselle, it's too difficult to stop a war based on guerrillas. How many guerrillas were there in Malaya? Ten thousand? OK. And how long did it take the British to beat them? Twelve years. You fight badly, badly, in a war mainly waged by *voyous,* hooligans.

Q: Did you say all these things to General Haig when he came here, President Thieu? I know that you didn't even offer him breakfast, as you did me. So I guess that the encounter wasn't friendly at all.

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A: Et bien, Mademoiselle, *vous savez* . . . He calls me "Mr. President," I call him "General." There was not much to say between us; it was quick. I said to him: "So you have come here, General. Tell me in what official capacity you're here." He answered: "I am here to explain President Nixon's point of view." I reminded him that he wasn't here, therefore, even as a negotiator, he was here only as a messenger. Then I listened to that point of view. When he finished, I told him I would write a personal letter to President Nixon and I would give it to him to bring back as a messenger. He left; he went to Phnom Penh; he came back; I gave him the letter: "*Voilà la lettre, mon General. Bon voyage, au revoir.*" I keep explaining and explaining myself to the Americans to get them to understand me. The day they will say, "We don't understand you, Mr. Thieu, so we abandon you," you'll see me react to their peace. But if that day doesn't come. . . . Sure I'm ready to see Dr. Kissinger again. I always expect him to come and see me, nor do I understand why he hasn't done it as yet. Maybe he thought that this wasn't the right time . . . maybe he's going to reach a modified agreement that sounds reasonable for Hanoi and for Saigon . . . maybe he will come to say, "The moment has come to make peace Mr. President. I think it's now reasonable to sign etcetera." In that case I will answer: "Come in, let's see."

Q: Would you even invite him to breakfast, as you didn't with Haig?

A: Why not? Since the North Vietnamese offered him tea and biscuits, why shouldn't I offer him breakfast or lunch? I'm not less polite than Le Duc Tho. And it is always possible to discuss while eating, without getting angry and spoiling the food. I am not an enemy of Dr. Kissinger. I am not even the enemy of the North Vietnamese as North Vietnamese. My only enemies are the Communists when they want to bring their communism here. Mademoiselle, once the war is over, I'm ready to shake hands with Giap and have a drink with him or even supper at his place. I'm ready to go to Hanoi and tell him "*Alors, mon général! Parlons un peu!* You are from the North and I am from the South. You have coal and I have rice. Let's build a railway between Hanoi and Saigon, then exchange merchandise. Now thanks for the supper and when shall I have the pleasure of having you as my guest in Saigon?"

Q: How many times you have mentioned the name of Giap, President Thieu! One would think that he's always on your mind. Do you judge him that important?

A: Mais non, Mademoiselle, *mais non.* . . . After all, Giap's only great victory remains Dien Bien Phu. And that victory was not so extraordinary as the French wrote in their newspapers. The greatness of Giap was invented by the French press and he isn't the Asiatic Napoleon that he would like to be. He is, or has been, just a good general. From a military point of view, Dien Bien Phu was an easy battle for Giap. The French lacked artillery, tanks, airplanes, so all that Giap had to do was to use the human tide and rotate his fresh divisions. Let's be honest. What did the French lose in Dien Bien Phu? Not even a tenth of their army. Every French general who was in Indochina at that time will tell you that the French army was far from being completely defeated. Had they received some reinforcements from Paris, they could also have defended North Vietnam. The war was not lost by the French at Dien Bien Phu because of Giap. The war was lost at Dien Bien Phu because it had been lost already in France—politically, psychologically, morally. It's Giap who thought he had done something militarily decisive at Dien Bien Phu. And since then he has been searching for a new Dien Bien Phu, without understanding that a modern army today has little to do with the French army in the early '50s. The mistake of Giap, in this war, has been not to have realized the power of the American army and to have underestimated the South Vietnamese army.

Q: I think it's time to speak about the Vietcong and the other major disagreement you had with Dr. Kissinger.

A: Très bien. What I maintain is that the political formula accepted by the Americans in October is a formula of coalition government that the Communists want to impose on us. What I maintain is that we'll never accept such a formula, no matter how well disguised. I do not impose any form of government on Hanoi, and I do not want Hanoi to impose any form of government on Saigon. The constitution of North Vietnam says that Vietnam is one, indivisible, from Lao Kai to Ca Mau. The constitution of South Vietnam says the same: Vietnam is one from Ca Mau to Lao Kai etcetera. But a de facto situation remains, and this situation is based on two states. So I always have considered that there are two states in the nation: the state of North Vietnam and the state of South Vietnam, each with its own government, its own parliament, its own constitution. Therefore each of these two states must decide its own political future without interference from the other. Like Germany. Like Korea. Do I make myself clear? I said two states, two states, two states waiting for reunification. When such reunification will come, only God knows. Personally I don't believe that it will come before 20 years or so. Which is why I have always advocated the admittance of North Vietnam and South Vietnam to the United Nations.

Q: Yet the Vietcong exist, President Thieu, and they are South Vietnamese. And since they exist, they should participate in the life of South Vietnam.

A: Yes, but without the interference of the North Vietnamese. Let the political future of South Vietnam be decided by us and by the Communists of South Viet-

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nam. I do accept negotiating with the NLF, organizing with them a committee for the elections, having them as a political party in the future. I do. But this is a question of South Vietnamese politics, not a question of North Vietnamese politics! I don't want to have anything imposed by Hanoi! I want to negotiate freely with the NLF! And how can I negotiate freely if the North Vietnamese stay here disguised as Vietcong? Mademoiselle, not even the NLF could negotiate freely if pressured by 300,000 North Vietnamese armed with tanks, artillery, guns. Not even the NLF! So I insist: leave us alone, us and the Vietcong. We would understand each other much quicker and better if you left us alone, because we are all South Vietnamese and because I know that most of the Vietcong who have fought for 20 years don't want to invade South Vietnam. How could they, since they are South Vietnamese themselves? I know that they simply want to participate in the political life of South Vietnam. An understanding between us is always possible!

Q: Have you tried it, President Thieu?

A: How can I if the North Vietnamese are here? How can they if the North Vietnamese are here? That's what I keep telling the Americans, too. Suppose I want to talk with Madame Binh, and I would like to indeed. How can I? How can she? Madame Binh hasn't the freedom to talk with me. Her spokesmen are the North Vietnamese! Only when the North Vietnamese are gone will the Vietcong be free to come to this palace. I'll invite them. And they will come, Mademoiselle. They will come, if they are not controlled and supervised by the North Vietnamese. Mademoiselle . . . two or three years ago the Chu Hoi movement, or if you prefer the deserter Vietcongs, was very large. Around 200,000. And this worried the North Vietnamese immensely. It's obvious: let the Chu Hoi continue and there will not be any NLF left. So what did the North Vietnamese do? They scattered their units in every village to substitute for the Vietcong or to prevent them from deserting. And . . . don't you see that the second disagreement I had with Dr. Kissinger is a consequence of the first disagreement? The main problem remains those 300,000 North Vietnamese!

Q: Yes, President Thieu. But you go a little further in refusing ipso facto a government of coalition. If you are ready to share politics with the NLF, why do you refuse the idea of a coalition government?

A: Because what I mean is not a coalition government; it's simply participation of the NLF in the elections. Because what I refuse is immediate imposition of a coalition government. A government is the result of elections. Right? So, even if one day there is a government totally controlled by the Communists, this will have to be decided by elections. Right? Not a prefabricated government. Not an imposed government. What I ask is three months for discussions with the NLF, plus three months to find an agreement and organize the elections, and finally the elections—one-man-one-vote. What I refuse is a coalition government ipso facto and arranged by Hanoi. Mademoiselle, *mais alors!* What more do you want from me? I'm a legal government and I accept discussions with those who want to take my place. I accept having elections with them . . . Dammit! I even accept the possibility that they might win, though I will eat my hat and cut my throat if they do win. They represent such a small percentage of the population. They're something between 50,000 and 100,000. Maybe you can say 100,000 but not more.

Q: Plus those who are now in jail. President Thieu, how could you organize real elections, considering all the Vietcong and suspected Vietcong who are in jail in South Vietnam?

A: Let me first respond to your reproach. When you are at war against an enemy, it's obvious that you put in jail those who work for the enemy. It happens in any war, in any country . . . *C'est la normalité*, Mademoiselle. Those in prison are those who participated in some act of murder or atrocity. However, when peace comes, their problem can be solved. I ask nothing but an exchange of prisoners—civilian prisoners, military prisoners, everyone. Well, the North Vietnamese have refused this also. I mean: I'm ready to exchange 10,000 North Vietnamese military prisoners and some thousands of civilian prisoners for 500 American pilots. And yet they aren't happy. What else do they want? Of course I will exchange those prisoners when the war is over, not before. But I will exchange them all. I repeat: North Vietnamese, Vietcong, Laotians, Cambodians, civilians, all! The fact is that the Americans have shown too much concern for their 500 prisoners in Hanoi, and now the North Vietnamese use them as some merchandise to impose political conditions on us. It's disgusting.

Q: And the neutralists? I understand that they are the largest majority in a population which is fed up with Thieu, with Hanoi, with the Vietcong, with the war . . .

A: They aren't the largest majority of the population, nor is the largest majority of the population as you say. Should it be so, I wouldn't be here. The largest majority, believe me, is scared as hell of the Communists. They became definitely scared after seeing the massacres that took place during the Tet Offensive and this last offensive. One can't otherwise explain what happened here with the campaign of flags. It was enough for me to say a word, and everybody bought a flag or painted its colors on the facades of their houses. Mademoiselle, the neutralists . . . I look on them as innocents and I don't worry about them. I rather pity them, because they play the game of the Communists. They're so naive. They think they are making politics and they

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let themselves be mocked by the Communists. It would be better for them to join the guerrillas and say that they're Communists. I would respect them much more. With their neutralism, they are neither politicians nor soldiers, they don't take any risk on one side or the other. . . . *Soyons serieux*, Mademoiselle! How can you be a neutralist in Vietnam?

Q: Is it for this that you have just issued a decree that suppresses opposition parties in Vietnam?

A: Mon Dieu! It isn't to suppress them. It's to encourage them to unite. We have 27 registered political parties in South Vietnam, plus 40 unregistered. Such a number would be a luxury even in peacetime, and let me point out that our constitution encourages the two-party system. Suppose that in three months we sign an agreement to stop the war, suppose that elections follow a political solution between us and the NLF. What would happen? It would happen that at the moment we are fighting the Communists in the game called democracy, we would be waging our battle divided among 27 registered parties and 40 unregistered ones. Isn't it better to unify a little to win? So I said: let's regroup the small political parties in no more than six large parties. Isn't that enough for a country of 17½ million inhabitants? Politics must not mean irresponsibility. Now what's the next question?

Q: President Thieu, we have been talking considerably about elections and democracy. So I feel entitled to ask you something unpleasant. How do you answer those who call you the dictator of South Vietnam?

A: Tiens! Mademoiselle, I don't know if we should tape this too, with your tape-recorder but . . . take a look at the countries of Southeast Asia today and then tell me which can be called democratic according to your concept of democracy. Thailand? Korea? Philippines? In all sincerity, it seems to me that Vietnam is the most democratic of them all. Maybe not democratic as you would like, but democracy isn't a standard to apply in an identical way everywhere. Democracy as they have it in America or as you have it in Europe cannot exist here as yet. We aren't ready for it yet. Don't forget that Vietnam never knew democratic life in the sense that you mean it. Until 1945 we were a French colony. Until 1954 we were dominated by the Vietminh. Until 1963 we were under President Diem. I take the liberty of affirming that democracy began to exist here in 1965 when I became president. What is your next question?

Q: I hate to be brutal but I have a series of rather brutal questions. First: What about the fact that you're called an American puppet or the man of the Americans?

A: Do the Americans say that?

Q: Yes, many Americans.

A: I'm the man of the Vietnamese, not the man of the Americans. Even less am I an American puppet and I think I have demonstrated that recently, also in this interview. Towards the Americans I feel as a friend and an ally, nothing more. I belong to nobody. Please, go on.

Q: Second: What about those who say that you are corrupt, the most corrupt man in Vietnam?

A: Mademoiselle . . . It isn't even worth answering. What should I answer? When the slander machine starts up, there is no way to stop it. Those accusations are not made by mistake; they are intentional and made with a purpose. One can correct a mistake, not a purpose. So I'll answer only with a question! Have you ever seen the daughter of a president living in a pension run by nuns in London? Mine lives there.

Q: Well . . . let's put it like this. Is it true that you were born very poor?

A: Very true. My father was an orphan at the age of ten. When he got married, my mother had to bring rice and coconuts to the village market, where she sold them to feed us. Thirteen days after the birth of her first child, she had to sell her little hut and go live on the other side of the river because she needed money. Thanks to her, my elder brother could study in Paris; my younger one could study in Hué; but I had to attend school in the village. My brothers are ambassadors today; they are two self-made men; but my sisters still bring the baskets of rice and chickens to the market as my mother did. Please, go on.

Q: Third: Is it true that today you are immensely rich, that you have bank accounts and houses in Switzerland, in London, in Paris, in Australia?

A: It isn't true and I swear it on the head of my children that I have nothing abroad. Not the house in London, not the house in Paris, not the house in Australia, or in Switzerland. Rumors of this last one came to me some time ago, through some Americans and I replied: "*Messieurs les Américains*, you have all the means for discovering this house and all the best cameras to take pictures of it. Show me the photos of that house." Mademoiselle, I only have something in Vietnam and do you want to know what I have? I have a place at headquarters because, being a general, I am entitled to possess two bachelor apartments. So I have made one apartment out of those two and I have modernized it a little to go there and rest on weekends. But it doesn't belong to me really; it belongs to the army and in fact I'll transform it into a museum when I retire. Then I have a wooden house on the river and I use it on Sundays when I go waterskiing on the river. It's a prefabricated house, rather inexpensive, and it was given to me by the Union of the Lumbermen as a gift. Then I have the house where I was born, and it is the

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poorest in the village. People pass it and joke: "Look at the house of the president!" Finally I have a little farm where I amuse myself in agricultural experiments. There I grow rice, watermelons; I raise chickens and ducks and pigs; and I also have fish in the ponds. That's all. Since I became president, I haven't even bought a car. I still use the car of President Diem, an old Mercedes with an engine that constantly breaks down. Can you imagine the President of Vietnam who solemnly returns from some tour and at the airport gets in this old car that suddenly conks out? And the military police must push it to make it go. And the President sits there cursing: "Dammit, I must buy a car!" Go on, Mademoiselle.

Q: Fourth: President Thieu, have you ever considered the possibility of going into exile?

A: No. Never. Of course I know that it has happened to other leaders in history, and so it could happen to me but . . . well . . . if they capture me to send me into exile and this is good for the country, what can I do? More than once I said to my generals: "*Messieurs les généraux, écoutez moi bien s'il vous plaît,* please listen to me attentively. I do this for the army, because I'm a man of the army and I believe that it's up to the army to build this country and to install and reinforce a regime that might last. But if one day you say, '*Alors, Monsieur Thieu, vous avez fini, partez, hop!*' then I'll go. I'll leave the power and go. There is no need to drive me dead out of here." Which is true. One can defend himself against the Vietcong commandos, not against the whole army. Please, go on.

Q: Fifth: President Thieu, aren't you afraid of being killed? Of being assassinated, for instance, as was President Diem?

A: No. Frankly, no. I believe in God and. . . . Not that I am completely a fatalist, mind you. In other words, I don't think that God is always there to protect you and so it's useless to protect oneself. On the contrary, I think that one must do all that is possible to relieve God of some of his work. However there is a limit to this too and, finally, I say: "I do my duty and I take care of the risks that such duty brings. It's up to God to do the rest. God, too, has to take responsibilities, *n'est-ce pas?* After all it's a matter of reciprocal trust!" But enough of jokes. Mademoiselle, let's be honest: it wouldn't be difficult to kill me. I shake hands with everybody, and I don't care too much about security, and my secret service men complain all the time. I always complain back: "I do my job. Do yours. And if you aren't able to do it, the worse for you and for me. *Je m'en fous.*" *Oui,* I don't give a damn because . . . how can one avoid being killed if someone really wants to? Last week I inspected 5000 men of the Self Defense force. Each of them had a loaded gun and, if one out of 5000 wanted to kill me, all he needed was a single bullet. Really, nothing is easier than assassinating a president of South Vietnam. But why should they since I told them that there is no need to get me out of here in a coffin? Such a possibility doesn't keep me awake at night. Mademoiselle, *j'aime la vie.* I love life. But if I were so afraid of death, I wouldn't have become a military man; I wouldn't have been in combat since 1965; I wouldn't have gone to face the North Vietnamese artillery and the Vietcong fire even as President. Instead I went. At Quang Tri, at Binh Long, at Kontum. I said my prayers to the Holy Virgin and went.

Q: Then you are that religious.

A: Oh, yes! Very! Every Sunday morning I attend Holy Mass in my chapel and every day I pray. I prayed for my troops to take back Quang Tri without too much loss of life. I went to the church of Saint Mary of the Advent and I prayed in the middle of the Communist artillery's assault. I also prayed when Dr. Kissinger was here and kept asking for things I couldn't accept. I'm a real Catholic. I was converted after eight years of thinking about it. My wife was already a Catholic when I married her in 1951, and since the Church said that I should convert I told the priest: "Monseigneur, I'm an officer and I'm fighting a war. I've no time to study the Catechism. Give me time. When the war is over, I'll study the Catechism, I promise." Then the war was over and I kept my promise but it wasn't so easy as I wanted to understand everything and I drove the priest crazy with questions. He was a poor parish priest; he didn't know how to answer. And I had to find a Dominican father to learn what I wanted to know and . . . *voyez-vous,* Mademoiselle: I like to do well whatever I do, whether being converted, playing tennis, riding a horse, waterskiing, staying in office as President. I like to assume my responsibilities, and this is why I don't share the power and I'm the chief. *Oui, je suis le chef.* Mademoiselle, *demandez moi: qui est le chef ici?*

Q: Qui est le chef ici? *Who is the chief here?*

A: Moi! C'est moi! C'est moi le chef. I am the chief.

Q: Thanks, President Thieu. I'll leave you now.

A: C'est tout? Is it all? I hope you are satisfied, Mademoiselle. I hope you are because I did not hide anything from you. I spoke with total frankness, I swear. *Je vous jure. Je ne vous ai rien caché; je vous ai parlé en toute franchise.* I didn't want to in the beginning. But then . . . what could I do? I'm made like that. Would you have ever expected to find a guy like that? *Un type comme ça?*

Q: Honestly not, President Thieu. You're better than I thought, though you are le chef.

A: Merci, Mademoiselle. And, if you can, please pray for peace in Vietnam. Peace in Vietnam means peace in the world, Mademoiselle. Sometimes I feel like there isn't anything else to do, anymore, but pray to God.

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Stanley Kauffmann on films

Good 'n' Bad

Pete 'n' Tillie (Universal). 1973 is young, but already we can award Filmdom's Booby Prize of the Year to the person who titled this picture. It is *not*, as it sounds, the movie version of a dirty comic book nor a remake of a Wallace Beery-Marie Dressler oldie. It is, for the most part, an amusing, moving sentimental comedy.

The script, based on a Peter De Vries novella, is by Julius J. Epstein, co-author of (to choose from a long list) *Casablanca*. The story, except for the last hoked-up turn, just attempts to let two peoples' lives run along before us. The dialogue is churlishly bright, and the wisecracks stay on this side of human possibility—that is, we don't feel, as we do so often with Neil Simon, that the characters have private gag-writers in their homes.

Walter Matthau and Carol Burnett (no, that isn't a typographical error) are two mature "singles" who meet, have an affair, marry, have a son, and lose him at nine to leukemia. (De Vries' novel, *The Blood of the Lamb*, about losing a young daughter to leukemia, is a beauty, insufficiently recognized.) After the boy's death the script goes phony: a fight between Burnett and her friend Geraldine Page, an interlude with a swishy man, a split between husband and wife, and an arbitrary reunion. But up to that last 15 minutes or so, it's a good laugh-and-cry film.

Matthau is by now Matthau, no more but—here at any rate—no less. The happy surprise is Carol Burnett. Under Martin Ritt's direction she gives a quiet, *realized* performance, with not a false moment in her, even when the script frazzles.

Ritt, a hot or very cold director, can't be said to redeem himself here after *Sounder:* his next picture may be just as slovenly and trite as that one was. (Even then he got a fine performance from Cicely Tyson.) Here he has worked with tight, discriminating control, with wit, and with an understatement that makes the sentiment effective. In her big scene, a set-piece but a good one, Burnett walks out on to the lawn at night, as the time of her son's death approaches, and explodes in fury at God and Mary and Jesus. The scene could have been disastrous. But Ritt has lighted one upper bedroom of the house, from which comes the sound of a raucous comedy record, as Matthau entertains the dying boy. Against this counterpoint, with discreet lighting, with the camera gliding along gently and bearing down closer as Burnett moves, Ritt gives her a perfect "frame" for her big moment. And she fills it well.

Sleuth (Twentieth Century-Fox). If you fault this sort of picture, people say, "But it's only supposed to be entertainment." Then why isn't it more entertaining? Some modest cleverness it has, but not nearly enough to justify more than two-and-a-half hours of plotty creak and countercreak, with one big point after another where my disbelief simply refuses to suspend.

Anthony Shaffer's play, with its spuriously polished dialogue and dimly diabolic plot, was at least tolerable because its crucial matter of disguise could be accepted in the perspective of the theater. On film (Shaffer's own screenplay) it is unbelievable—as is much else. (No plot details; reviewers are sworn to secrecy. Thank heaven. Who would *want* to tell this story?) I can't see why entertainment should not, in its own terms, be believable; how can it be entertaining if it's not? When an orchestra suddenly plays out of nowhere so that Astaire may dance, I never question it because it is in the texture and nature of his films that music should sound as needed. But for a principal character in *Sleuth*, himself a writer of mysteries, to believe what he believes is baloney.

Joseph L. Mankiewicz has directed smartly but smugly, with "in" references to his own work and friends, with other "in" references to '30s film devices. For instance, all through the film there are quick close-ups of the life-size dolls in the author's home, a grinning, silent chorus—reminiscent of what we used to get in Lionel Atwill films.

Much fuss is being made about Laurence Olivier's performance as the author. He's good enough, surely, but no better than a dozen other English actors might have been. However, this is Lord O. in Entertainment, and we are all supposed to rave at Greatness Unbending. Michael Caine is far more impressive in the other major role, the hairdresser who is having an affair with the author's wife, because he shows a greater range, not (as Olivier does) a smaller one.

The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean (National General). John Huston continues to disintegrate in public. After the flabby *Fat City*, he flounders about foolishly in this Western "ballad" about the outlaw who set himself up as judge in the Bad Old Days west of the Pecos. John Milius, co-author of the good *Jeremiah Johnson* (reviewed last issue), wrote this script alone and evidently needs collaborators. He has tried to write a grimly humorous epic. For a while it comes out as unconscious

(continued on page 33)

Films Worth Seeing

The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie. Buñuel, apparently getting younger, mocks the fantasies of the stuffily corrupt with pitiless wit.

The Emigrants. Liv Ullmann. Max von Sydow. If that's not enough, some truth about 19th-century Sweden that drove people to the US.

Jeremiah Johnson. Robert Redford as a trapper in the Rockies 130 years ago, in a picture of exceptional authenticity.

The Ruling Class. A generally fascinating mess about a religious nut who inherits an earldom. Peter O'Toole fine, as are most of the others.

La Salamandre. Two TV-documentary writers meet more reality than they can document in a workingclass girl. Funny, limber, significant.

The Sorrow and the Pity. German-occupied France and France today, interwoven in a sterling four-and-a-half-hour documentary.

Traffic. Jacques Tati's latest comedy is his best: a balletic spoof about auto madness. Actually more to be looked at than laughed at.

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John Seelye on art

In Camera

Lloyd Goodrich's biography of Winslow Homer remains unchallenged by this new volume, which presents no new biographical facts. What John Wilmerding attempts is to put Homer in context. Not only does he try to place him among his contemporaries, a gallery hung with pictures by such artists as Eastman Johnson and Thomas Eakins,

Winslow Homer
by John Wilmerding
(Praeger; $30)

but he rummages through the literary attic also, dusting off predictable comparisons to (among others) Melville (the sea), Whitman (the Civil War) and Mark Twain (boys).

Not much of this last is very convincing. In an age which favored "picturesque" settings, Melville preferred philosophical encounters, and to speak of his "love of primitive wilderness, its beauty and its terror," is to resurrect a once-popular misconception. Whitman *is* a pictorial poet, but he favored the genre picture, vignettes of American life like those turned out by such popular artists as William Sidney Mount and Caleb Bingham. And the "boys" of Mark Twain are really, to borrow Louisa Alcott's title, little men—puppets whose activities parody or whose sensibilities reflect the adult world.

Nor is Wilmerding successful, in my untutored opinion, in his analogies to and suppositions concerning Homer's indebtedness to and influence upon his artistic contemporaries, either in America or abroad. All such resemblances, on close inspection, prove to be circumstantial, even factitious. As Wilmerding himself notes, the similarity between the ladies-on-the-lawn of Monet and Homer is illusory, breaking down on the critical matter of perspective and depth. Ladies of the '60s wore similar fashions, and the artist who would paint them at work and play achieved similar images.

More convincing is Wilmerding's argument concerning the influence of Japanese woodcuts, which were all the rage when Homer went abroad in the '60s. And his suggestions regarding the impact of classical statuary, particularly the Elgin marbles, on Homer's development toward monumentality, are plausible; they provide a new dimension to an understanding of his intention, particularly in his canvases portraying seafarers and fisherfolk.

But Homer remains a solitary, in his painting as in his life, and this is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the effect on his art, discussed though not emphasized by Wilmerding, of both the popular, journalistic arts and the then-new "art" of the camera. Except for Mark Twain, it would be difficult to think of another 19th-century American whose creative work first sprang from the necessities of the popular market, yet which in transcending those necessities, remained influenced by them in choice of theme and technique. Perhaps Henry James is pertinent here, whose earliest fiction is filled with popular tropes and conventions and whose last and greatest novels rested harmoniously in the pages of *Harper's Magazine*. But James was never a popular writer in any real sense, while Mark Twain, save for one miraculous instance, did not transcend the exigencies of the marketplace. As with so many other apparent similarities, these upon close examination only serve to emphasize Homer's singularity. He alone fought his way up, through, and out of the lucrative but debased realm of popular, journalistic, narrative illustration.

His rise was rapid. Homer served only a brief apprenticeship of some half-dozen years before he began to turn out the Civil War pictures which appeared in *Harper's Weekly*. A number of these, indeed the majority, are hack work, hardly distinguishable from those of A.R. Waud, Homer's contemporary: camp scenes, battle scenes, hospital scenes. But no one who comes across Homer's "A Sharp-Shooter on Picket Duty" (1862) does so without reacting with an almost visceral jolt. No reproduction, necessarily smaller than the original, does that picture justice. It occupies the whole space and fills the whole eye. The composition has the balance and proportion of the sharpshooter's rifle itself, a powerful arrangement of weights and thrusts, and it looks forward to the greatest of Homer's later paintings. In the determined sniper peering through his sight, it is not hard to see Homer himself, drawing a bead on his own future. If there is a key to the "mystery" of Winslow Homer, who resolutely refused to give the world any hints about himself or the literal meaning of his art, it is that powerful painting of the sharpshooter.

It is, first of all, a popular subject—a man with a rifle waiting to kill another man—elevated into a higher realm of expression, achieved through the use of perspective and composition—force and counterforce suggested by angles and lines. Second, it is a picture obviously informed by the emerging art of the camera, specifically the work of early "combat" photographers like Mathew Brady. As Wilmerding notes in this regard, Civil War photographers were not able to take action shots. They photographed the living in stiff, archaic poses and only their pictures of the dead seem natural, soldiers holding still for an eternity. The braced sharpshooter in the tree is not only the kind of subject sought by photographers, but the perspective from which he is seen suggests a camera angle. He fills the picture, to the exclusion of all else, another photographic device. In "Prisoners from the Front" (1866), a painting which brought Homer critical recognition and praise, the artist transformed the convention of the stiffly posed photograph into an arrangement of opposed forces, the three disarmed Confederate prisoners confronted by a young Union officer, against a blurred, out-of-focus background. The result is a monumental study, a universal not a journalistic comment, a picture in which the specificity of the moment breaks away like a plaster mold from a group in bronze.

Homer's subsequent interest in classical models like the Elgin marbles amplified his monumental vocabulary, but did not essentially modify his photographic vision. In a book which appeared last year, *The Painter and the Photograph: From Delacroix to Warhol* (University of New Mexico Press; $32), Van Deren Coke provides a startling demonstration of how the camera opened up a new range of sensibilities for the artists of Homer's era. Not only did the camera provide images that could be easily copied, but in copying them many painters became aware of a "new" reality produced by certain distortions and the limits of focus, limitations that presented the kind of esthetic problems which artists delight in exploring. It has been said that modern novelists do not read other novels, they go to the movies, and the cinematic result is predictable. Homer, similarly,

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looked at photographs, and his sharpshooter is the consequence, a looming afterimage possessing the power and clarity of camera work. Thus the soldier's canteen, hanging in the tree from a triangle of cord, takes on a force of its own, inexplicable, mysterious, yet definitive withal.

As the camera was improved, fast shutters and films opened up further possibilities. Homer's contemporary, Thomas Eakins, became a skilled amateur with the camera, and his work is discussed at length by Coke (who rather scants Homer's indebtedness). But as Gordon Hendricks' excellent collection, *The Photographs of Thomas Eakins* (Viking Press; $30), demonstrates, Eakins chiefly used the camera to improve his painterly verisimilitude. His most ambitious photographs are often embarrassingly mawkish and stiff, posed imitations of conventional, "artistic" subjects. Homer, if the sole example provided by Wilmerding is typical, was a rather clumsy hand with a Kodak, but in the truest sense of the word he was a cameraman where Eakins was not. Wilmerding discusses the photographic qualities of Homer's later paintings, in particular his fishing scenes, where the foreground "shots" of leaping trout borrow the perspective and the ability to catch and hold an object in motion which the versatile camera possesses. Increasingly, it seems, Homer came to see reality as through the lens of a camera, starkly.

Homer was a very retiring bachelor; he had few friends outside his family circle, and was content to live alone and paint for months at a time. The reasons for his solitude have been conjectured, and include an unsuccessful courtship, but they are irrelevant. What counts is the essential unhumanity of his paintings: even when dominated by the human form, his pictures lack the human element. Journalistic illustration (then as now) demands the "human" touch, and Homer early in his career dutifully turned out pictures of his fellow Americans at work and at play. But it is instructive to compare his illustrations with the paintings from which he made them. Thus the illustration, "Ship Building, Gloucester Harbor" (1873), in which a massive hull under construction looms up in the background, uses as counterpoint a group of boys, two of whom are "working" on small model boats in the foreground. The "Just Like Big Folks" motif is obvious, producing a genre of narrative touch. But this picture is made up from two paintings. The looming hull is taken from "Ship Building at Gloucester" (1871), in which the sole counterpoint is provided in the foreground by massive timbers and boards. (In the illustration, these serve as seats for the boys.) And the two boys with their boats are isolated in "The Boat Builders" (1873), perched on boulders against an ocean backdrop. The quaint, narrative element is missing. Instead we have qualities of isolation, monumentality, and even mystery, characteristics of Homer's best work.

It is this cameralike objectivity, the "fixing" of objects in isolation, which accounts, I think, for the predominantly somber mood of Homer's paintings. In discussing the schoolhouse interior in "New England Country School" (1872), Wilmerding suggests that the architectural orderliness of the composition "complements the sense of simple but strong virtues, such as orderly, pragmatic learning, and the essential meaning of the one-room schoolhouse." He neglects to point out that the compositional counterforces have their equivalents in the standing, dominant, female teacher and the scattered, seated and isolated children—predominantly male. The architectonic strength of the composition is undeniable, but the harmony is illusory: "force" is the subject, and the mood is hardly positive. The painting receives a more literal, narrative commentary in an illustration which Wilmerding includes as a variant of the original, "The Noon Recess" (1873), where a discontented young woman stares moodily out of a window while a small child reads a book, presumably as punishment. Outside are the rest of the children, at play, but their faces are not smiling either. At school or at play, Homer's children are caught like his adults in patterns of force.

Did Homer ever paint a portrait? The faces in his pictures are usually indistinct or shrouded by inner thought or emotion. Where Eakins employed his camera to capture definitive details, as in the studies used for his magnificent portrait of Walt Whitman, Homer neglected this possibility of the photograph entirely. He preferred to generalize when it came to faces, and his people look pretty much alike—part of his monumental approach. His subjects are often at work or absorbed in some reflection, like a fisherman hauling in a net or a fisherman's wife staring out to sea. The subject matter is hardly unusual for his day: the popular magazines and cheap chromos are full of similar fisherfolk, but these popular pictures emphasize facial expressions registering sorrow, fear, effort, happiness. When in his well-known "The Life Line" (1844), Homer chose a presumably dramatic, "human" situation, he peopled it with an unconscious woman and a man whose face is hidden by a blowing shawl. The result is an absolute emotional vacuum, figures hanging from a line slung between an invisible wreck and an unseen shore. No hands stretch to meet them, no emotional keys are provided.

We are all familiar with Homer's "The Gulf Stream" (1899), with its black man adrift on a wrecked schooner. Angry at anxious inquiries about the castaway's ultimate fate, Homer snarled in a letter, "You can tell these ladies that the unfortunate negro who is now so dazed & parboiled, will be rescued & returned to his friends and home, & ever after live happily." Not only does his retort reveal Homer's hatred of the conventional journalistic or narrative picture—which *does* ask for a "human" response—it even suggests that he quite frankly didn't give a damn what happened to the dazed and parboiled man. "The subject," as he says in the same letter, "is comprised in *its title*. . . . I have crossed the Gulf Stream *ten* times & I should know something about it. The boat & sharks are outside matters of very little consequence." They are, that is to say, compositional and not dramatic details, definitive in matters other than emotional.

Again and again in Homer's work we find conventional subjects executed in such a way as to deny the viewer a conventional response. Trained in a craft which emphasized the narrative, emotional element in pictorial art, Homer seems to have spent the rest of his life repudiating that emphasis. Why? We shall never know. How? John Wilmerding has provided some intriguing possibilities, the most interesting of which is that it was the camera which showed Homer the monumental way. If this is an odd possibility, Homer was an odd painter, who came to his art by means of an unlikely craft and who led an unusual life. Perhaps that is why

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

ANDREW MCLAUGHLIN *teaches philosophy at Lehman College, CUNY. Poet* JAMES WRIGHT*'s latest volume will be published this spring by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.*

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comparisons, with other painters or with writers, produce dissimilarities mostly. The differences are what define, for Homer was a solitary, and he remains singular. As for the rest, all we have are his paintings, but, as Homer himself pointed out, they should be enough. Henry James reacted to those paintings by calling them "damnably ugly." He was on the right track. They were painted by a man with an eye which very much resembles that of his sharpshooter: cold, Cyclopean and objective.

Life's Natural Revolutionaries

Nobody Ever Died of Old Age

by Sharon R. Curtin

(Atlantic/Little, Brown; $6.95)

Emerson defined poetry as the force of few words. In this sense this is a poetic book. Subtitled "In Praise of Old People, In Outrage at Their Loneliness," it has all the force of the voluminous words of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Coming of Age* reduced to a fine, taut, economical size. It is a touching, poignant, unsentimental, sometimes humorous and always potent piece of polemic writing which ought, for a long time to come, to serve America's aged as a manifesto, in somewhat the same way as James Forman's Riverside Church paper did the black community a few years ago. It is a persuasive exposition of the predicament of the old, and a call to action on their behalf and by themselves.

Sharon Curtin allows herself one small excursion into autobiography before she embarks on her thesis. It is valuable because it provides us with a nonliterary, nonsociological reason for her concern for her subject, a human one: having begun research on the problems of old age by working briefly in a nursing home (she is a registered nurse), her marriage collapsed.

> I had lost a husband, two kids, a home, a dog and a cat so fast I was just beginning to come out of numbness into the real despair. Sometimes I wanted to kill, sometimes I wanted to die. . . . I felt just like the old people I was trying to understand. Sick and lonely and wondering if it was worth the trouble to take another breath.

If this was her proximate impetus to explore at first hand a subject which ordinarily repels the nonaged, her ultimate reason was her memories of her own grandparents. For them she retains her child's affection, awe, admiration. There is deeply religious Carrie, her Irish grandmother, still alive and active at 96. There is another granny who left her husband and five children to hitchhike across the country and then to live freely at the age of 75 "with a friend"—she put up Elvis Presley posters on her wall, and died at 83, hit by a truck as she ran to catch a bus. And Willy Curtin, who lived a long, independent old age, defining the state as "a hell of a long sentence with no time off for good behavior." And Granddad who supported himself as a carpenter until his death at 82, who outlived mortal diseases and many attempts to put him into an old peoples' home, only to die, oddly enough for one woman's personal history, under the impact of another truck. All of them lived full lives in the small town in Colorado which they helped to settle, where they were integral and valued parts of their families, friends to the children for whom they provided a sense of their own past. They were treated with the respect and courtesy due persons who are a vital part of another time; they were especially understood by the young because both conditions "understand and accept limits in ability." Sharon Curtin's fear, which provoked this book into being, is that

> mine will be the last generation to know old people as friends, to have

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a sense of what growing old means, to respect and understand man's mortality and his courage in the face of death. Mine may be the last generation to have a sense of living history, of stories passed from generation to generation, of identity established by family history.

It is such an unholy waste.

Documentation of her point, that 20 million Americans, 10 percent of the total population, are declared obsolete, totally rejected and useless, but still are, against these odds, able to face their uncertain future with gallantry and, often, courage, began in a flophouse, an appropriate place, it seemed to her, because she "walked in carrying my own burden of loneliness." Here she discovered a truth about the old, that they are the natural revolutionaries of our time because they have time and nothing to lose. Here she met Harry and Al, old men in their 70s, drifters since the Depression, whose lives were empty rituals of professional survival by panhandling and petty thievery. To their passing-through feminine friend they appeared mindless, blind, insensitive but nonetheless better able to survive, through these qualities of their aging, than she was. So she moved on.

The next chapters are collections of further evidence: well-to-do Aunt Jenny, 72, and "peaking":

> There seems to be a particular point in lives of old people when they've reached the top of the mountain, when they seem . . . to see everything with dreadful clarity. All ambition gone, all sense of having a coherent future lost, they have no veils to shield a vision of themselves, their past, the world. Some old people cannot bear this "amazing grace" because it seems to signal their closeness to death.

Aunt Jenny's problem was not poverty. She was an independent woman who had survived a convenient but loveless marriage and had grown to appreciate solitary pleasures. But under all this was a real rebellion against the condition of aging. "Where's the compensation? What's the *good* of being old? . . . every stage of life has pain, hurt, sorrow. But always before, there was a balance of joy and happiness. Where is it now?"

The biographies of Letty "the bag-lady," of the old and accomplished shoplifter, and of the old Vadials; the chilling description of arid life in a middle-class retirement village which the author visits with a "dummy" prospective client; the tale of the maiden lady, Miss Larson, 96, intellectual, who decays in a convalescent home into paranoia: all this must be read to understand Sharon Curtin's deep resentment against the lives old people are forced to live, against places in which they are sent or put or find themselves.

Her resentment is equally strong against the high rate of suicide among the old, caused by social isolation, loss of human status, inactivity, poverty. She describes the Gruner family, and her combat on their behalf with the geriatric section of a state mental hospital. With our age's reverence for youth, she concludes ("You're so *young*" is the highest compliment the old can be paid by the rest of us) there is no warmth, no time and life worth living, no security in old age. Only the silence, the eccentricity, the anger and isolation of the aged is permitted. With the decline and disappearance of the extended family and the growth to extraordinary proportions of impersonal social welfare, with our society's lack of respect for and cultural and economic resentment of the old, there seems nothing for them to do but submit to their tragic, inhuman condition.

But the book has a moral and a message: reform must come, not from without but from the old themselves:

> I think it is time for old people to turn their energies toward discovering their common oppression; to move from thinking about safe, gracious living out in some planned community to a fight for self-respect and their right to a place in the larger community.

She suggests that the mode for such reform might be taken from the women's liberation movement, the formation of consciousness-raising groups among the aged to share their common predicament, their fears, and then "raise up angry." In some places this process has already begun among life's natural revolutionaries. Further, they might begin to look into other life-styles, such as new social units, extended families of the aged. And they may well begin to demand, as their natural and common right, an acceptance of the concept of a guaranteed income.

The lesson, the homily, of the book extends to the rest of us who, only for the moment, escape the geriatric condition.

HOLLYWOOD NOW

William Fadiman

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It is to become deeply aware of and concerned about the entire quality of life, our whole life cycle, so that the vision of it includes old age for what it is and can be, so that the old become part of the total value of life because we and they demand that it be so, that they (and us, soon) not be ignored and disinherited of the ends of life, so that they are then able "to pass on to the new generations a gift of life, an example of dignity in the face of death itself."

There is nothing for it. You must read this book.

Doris Grumbach

Crisis in Theory and Practice

Aspects of Sociology

by the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research translated by John Viertel

(Beacon Press; $9.95)

Several recent American sociologists have declared that American sociology, under the influence of functionalism, has entered a state of theoretical and practical crisis. There is a growing feeling that fundamental rethinking of the goals and theories of sociology is now needed, and in this process the presence of a vital "critical" perspective in the Frankfurt school may prove to be of great value. This book in making parts of that perspective more accessible is most welcome. Critical sociology in the Frankfurt vein involves, among other things, a denial of two central premises of positivism—first, that truth is solely the duplication in theory of the existing societal reality; and, second, that science is or should be value free. For critical theorists truth essentially involves practice; and the notion of practice leads to value. There are serious and complicated issues involved in such claims, and an adequate consideration of them requires systematic philosophical discussion. Such a treatment from a critical perspective can be found in Jurgen Habermas' difficult but rewarding *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Beacon Press), but there is little to motivate the working sociologist to immerse himself in philosophical discussion. The virtue of *Aspects of Sociology* is that it gives, in a readily accessible way, some sense of what issues within sociology are at stake in such philosophical discussions.

This book, originally published in German in 1956, was authored by the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research and has its roots in a series of lectures given by the institute over the radio. The primary aim of the book is to convey a concept of critical sociology by first looking at certain central sociological concepts such as society, the individual and the masses, and then focusing on specific areas of empirical research such as the family, communities, prejudice and ideology. The book is not, and does not make claims to being, a systematic treatise in critical sociology. The concepts discussed are located within a larger historical tradition, sometimes as far back as the Greeks. Research on empirical questions is located within larger sociological perspectives. Thus, it is argued here that a fully adequate understanding of the family or the community depends in part upon an understanding of the societal whole. Of course, understanding of the whole requires knowledge of the parts and the whole process of knowing society is seen as dialectical.

The central thrust of the Frankfurt Institute's critical approach can be seen in the following: "Only a critical spirit can make science more than a mere duplication of reality by means of thought, and to explain reality means, at all times, to break the spell of this duplication. Such a critique, however, does not imply subjectivism. . . . The given will only offer itself up to the view which regards it from a perspective of true interest—the perspective of a free society, a just state, and the full development of the human being." It is important to note that critical sociology explicitly disavows the temptation to omit the labor of empirical research. "The path of true humanism leads through the midst of the specialized and technical problems, insofar as one succeeds in gaining insight into their significance within the societal whole and in drawing conclusions from this."

This book is a useful introduction to critical sociology and could lead its readers toward more systematic works within this tradition. It might function well as a supplementary text in sociology courses. Beacon Press has played an important role in making the writings of critical theorists available to those who do not read German, although this book is overpriced.

Andrew McLaughlin

education, training, & the urban ghetto

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The Old WPA Swimming Pool in Martins Ferry, Ohio

I am almost afraid to write down
This thing. I must have been,
Say, seven years old. That afternoon,
The families of the WPA had come out
To have a good time celebrating
A long gouge in the ground,
That the fierce husbands
Had filled with concrete.

We knew even then the Ohio
River was dying.
Most of the good men who lived along that shore
Wanted to be in love and give good love
To beautiful women, who weren't pretty,
And to small children like me who wondered,
What the hell is this?

When people don't have quite enough to eat
In August, and the river,
That is supposed to be some holiness,
Starts dying,

They swim in the earth. Uncle Sherman,
Uncle Willie, Uncle Emerson, and my father
Helped dig that hole in the ground.

I had seen by that time two or three
Holes in the ground,
And you know what they were.

But this one was not the usual, cheap
Economics, it was not the solitary
Scar on a poor man's face, that respectable
Hole in the ground you used to be able to buy
After you died for seventy-five dollars and
Your wages tached for six months by the Heslop
Brothers.

Brothers, dear God.

No, this hole was filled with water,
And suddenly I flung myself into the water.
All I had on was a jockstrap my brother stole
From a miserable football team.

Oh never mind, Jesus Christ, my father
And my uncles dug a hole in the ground,
No grave for once. It is going to be hard
For you to believe: when I rose from that water,

A little girl who belonged to somebody else,
A face thin and haunted appeared
Over my left shoulder, and whispered, Take care now,
Be patient, and live.

I have loved you all this time,
And didn't even know
I am alive.

JAMES WRIGHT

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Kauffmann, *from page 26*

self-parody and then isn't even that interesting.

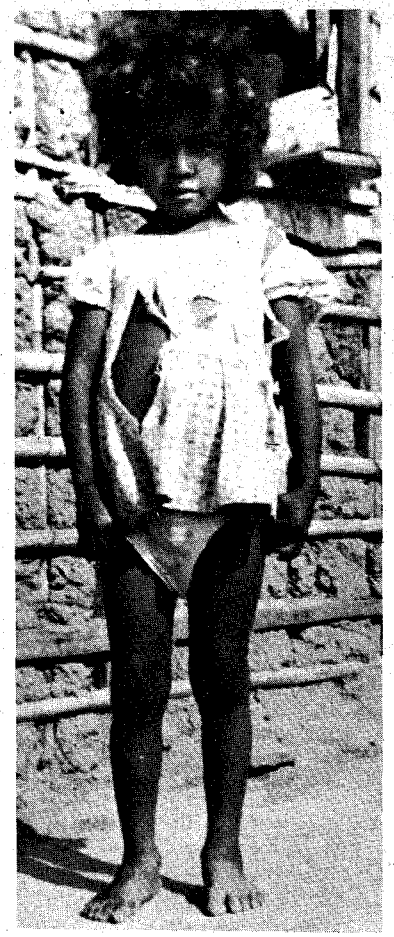
To Bean's courthouse, actually a saloon in the wilderness, come a number of visitors, including Huston himself as a mountain man who leaves a bear behind. Bean has a Mexican wife, a daughter, a disappearance, a reappearance when his community strikes oil and goes "commercial," and, through it all, a veneration of the famous Lily Langtry whom he worships from afar. None of it makes any sense, even as free-wheeling entertainment, but the acute disappointment is in Paul Newman as Bean. He gives one of his very rare bad performances—simply Newman from Connecticut in a beard. Not only has he no clue about Bean as a character, he has no grasp of the key to center him in. There is no ironic-comic touch, no edge. It's all light-years away from the finely turned comedy of his acting in that unappreciated pleasure of last year, *Pocket Money*.

The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds (Twentieth Century-Fox). When a theater curtain rises to disclose a kitchen with a dirty refrigerator, I always wish it would come right down again. There was such a refrigerator in Paul Zindel's recent play *The Secret Affairs of Mildred Wild*, and my instant reaction was soon justified. Zindel's earlier play, *Marigolds*—a Pulitzer winner, yet—was the same sort. I don't actually remember a refrigerator in the play, but then I stayed for only the first half; I stayed for the whole film, and it has the dirty fridge.

The play and film (screenplay by Alvin Sargent) are built on a slightly refurbished version of that stock character, the woman with messy hair and soiled wrapper who slops around the house in slippers and whose weary heart is really full of repressed prose-poetry. Again, small bits of facsimile are noodled up into long wistful speeches that end in pregnant silence; again it is all

NOTE

American Film Criticism: From the Beginnings to Citizen Kane, edited by NR film editor Stanley Kauffmann with Bruce Henstell, has just been published by Liveright, paperbound ($3.95) and hardbound ($12.00).



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based on that safety-net theme for the dumb playwright: Loneliness. Loneliness is Bad, friends, and don't you think that Zindel or any of the children of Inge and Chayefsky are going to let you forget it.

Joanne Woodward plays the widowed mother of two daughters in high school. She is having ego contests with her girls, the older of whom is sexy and epileptic, the younger of whom is quiet and keen on science. Woodward is all right, but no actress who can cross a stage or film-set without falling down could completely fail in this set-up part. Roberta Wallach, the daughter of Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson, is properly abrasive as the older girl. The film's chief asset is Nell Potts, the daughter of Woodward and Paul Newman, who plays the younger girl. She is lovely, grave, endearing. I hope we can see her again.

Newman, apparently the busiest man in the whole international film world, directed his wife and daughter and others in this picture and did very well. There is some heavy stuff at a school assembly and there is a conscious "bit" on an early morning hillside, but most of it is nice and clean with genuine straightforward concern. The camera looks to find out, not to show off. The rumor about Newman's first directing job, *Rachel, Rachel*, was that his editor, the excellent Dede Allen, had helped him tremendously. Here his editor is Evan Lottman. All I can say is that if Newman doesn't have directing ability, then he's damned lucky in his editors.

Images (Columbia). Robert Altman *is* lucky, less talented, more pretentious. M*A*S*H* was where his luck first showed, then ran out at once. *Brewster McCloud* revealed an inflated empty mind, which fact was confirmed by *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*, now sealed by *Images*. A schizo, played by the punily gifted and highly affected Susannah York, kills or does not kill her husband and some lovers. (We look through her eyes.) The beauty of Ireland, where it was shot, is insulted by the prettiness of the photography.

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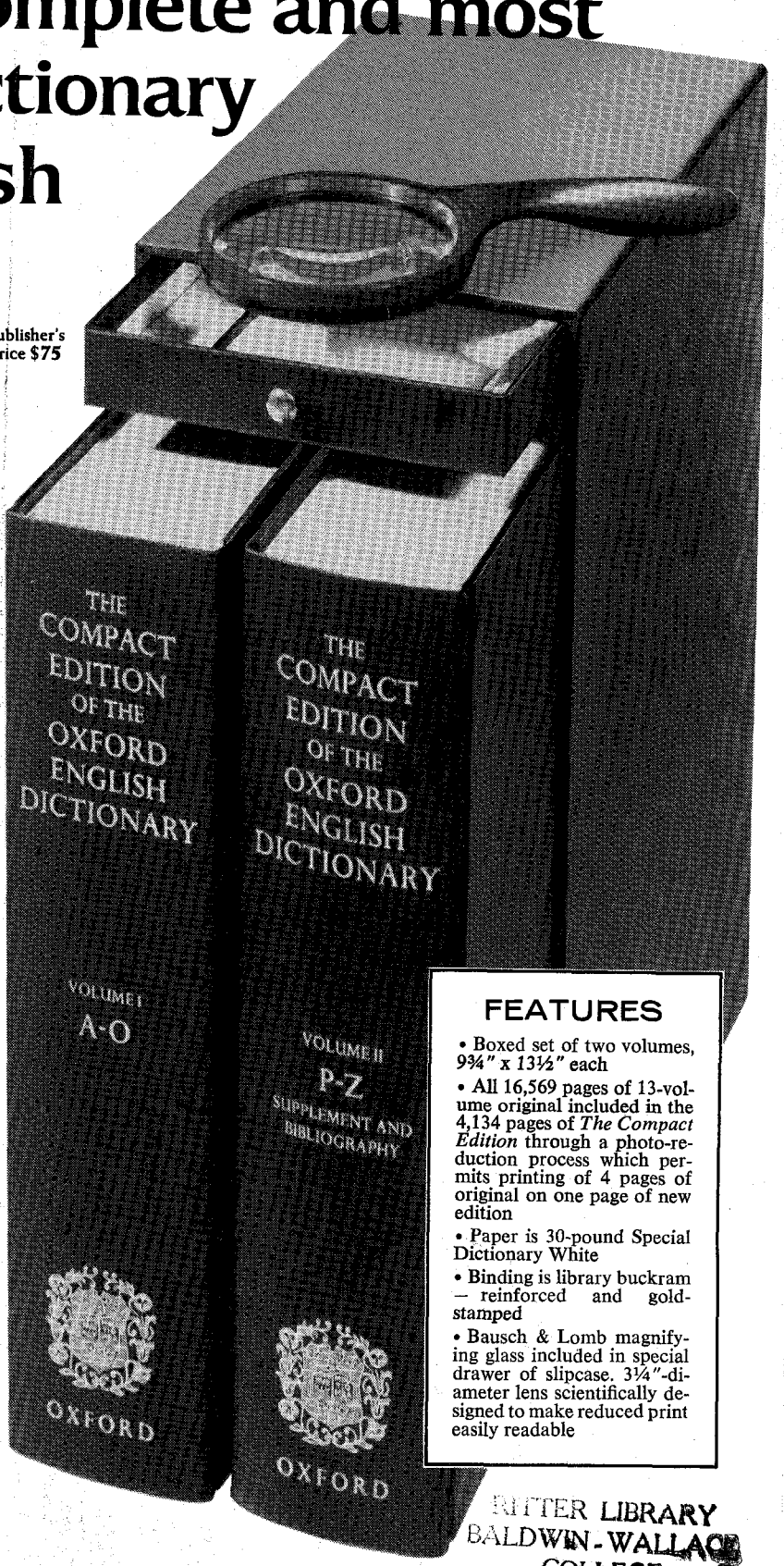
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